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SPIRIT-IDENTITY

Higher Aspects of Spiritualism

BY

"M.A., OXON."

AUTHOR OF

"Psychography," "The Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," "Spirit Teachings," etc.

23

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The first edition of *Spirit Identity* has long been out of print, but the demand for it continues. The Rev. W. Stainton Moses (M.A., Oxon.), the author of the book, was the original promoter and the first President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and the Council of the Alliance issues this reprint as an affectionate tribute to his memory.

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I inscribe this Volume

to

my old friends,

DR. AND MRS. STANTHOPE SPEER,

*As witnesses from the first of that sequence of events of which
this record is but a sample :*

*As those, therefore, who are best able to understand
both what is therein written, and what
is omitted :*

*And, lastly, as a testimony of grateful and
sincere friendship and regard.*

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"UTTERANCES OF EMINENT MEN OF SCIENCE
ON THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUALISM.

"Sit with you! No! I have resolved to sit with no one. I made up my mind before coming here that nothing would come of it."—AGASSIZ (*Member of Investigation Committee, Harvard University*) to Mr. Redman.

"They who say they see these things are not competent witnesses of facts."

"It would be a condescension on my part to pay any more attention to them."—FARADAY.

"Spirit is the last thing I will give in to."—BREWSTER.

"I have settled the question in my own mind on *a priori* grounds."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me."—HUXLEY.

"There are people amongst us who, it is alleged, can produce effects before which the discoveries of Newton pale. There are men of science who would sell all that they have, and give the proceeds to the poor, for a glimpse of phenomena which are mere trifles to the Spiritualist."

"The world will have religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of Spiritualism."—PROFESSOR TYNDALL.

"A most mischievous epidemic delusion, comparable to the witchcraft delusion of the seventeenth century."—W. B. CARPENTER.

"Spiritualism amongst its more devout followers is a Religion."—CROOKES.

"It demonstrates mind without brain, and intelligence disconnected from a material body. . . . It furnishes that *proof* of a future life which so many crave, and for want of which so many live and die in anxious doubt, so many in positive disbelief."—A. R. WALLACE.

"The Spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science. Their opponents are the representatives of those who have striven against progress."
—DE MORGAN.

Asked, What is the use of it? FRANKLIN replied, WHAT IS THE USE OF A NEW-BORN BABY?

"The testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."—PROFESSOR CHALLIS.

"Already Spiritualism, conducted as it usually is, has had a prodigious effect throughout America, and partly in the Old World also, in redeeming multitudes from hardened atheism and materialism, proving to them by the positive demonstration which their cast of mind requires, that there is another world—that there is a non-material form of humanity—and that many miraculous things which they had hitherto scoffed at are true."—ROBERT CHAMBERS.

"Even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man's hand; it is modern Spiritualism."
—LORD BROUGHAM

PREFACE.

THIS volume has grown out of a paper originally read at a discussion meeting of the British National Association of Spiritualists, held at their rooms, 38, Great Russell Street, London, on the evening of December 16, 1878.

In that paper I presented certain evidence for the identity of spirits who have from time to time communicated with me ; and I founded an argument upon the evidence produced.

Confined within narrow limits by the exigencies of the occasion, I dealt with one phase of the subject only, and my treatment of it was cursory. I have, however, considered it best to print the paper as it originally was delivered, with some few additional facts, and to supplement its imperfections and omissions, to some extent, in other parts of the book, especially in the Introduction.

I have also reprinted from the *Spiritualist* certain papers bearing on the general subject of this work ; and I have added in another Appendix cases of identity before published, to which allusion is made in the course of my argument.

Writing, as I now do, for the student who has

Preface.

penetrated within the outer ring of this subject, I assume a certain amount of knowledge on his part, and a certain acceptance of principles, which I do not stop to discuss.

And it is fair to add that I deduce from my facts certain arguments for the religious tendency of Spiritualism, which my readers will modify or reject as it pleases them. Probably they have their own religious notions already; but whether so or not, the facts are independent of any theory that may be built upon them.

M.A., (Oxon.)

LONDON,

Christmas, 1878.

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SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS volume differs from my previous one on *PSYCHOGRAPHY* in this respect: I write now for those who have studied and made themselves familiar with spiritual phenomena; whereas then I wrote for the uninstructed world, who have no knowledge on the subject beyond what can be gained from a casual conversation or a misleading paragraph in some newspaper.

Then I was careful to employ non-committal terms, to state no theory for acceptance, and to refrain generally from the use of any language that might serve to increase the prejudice wherewith new truth is always viewed. Here, on the contrary, I am speaking to the esoteric body, and am propounding evidence for the perpetuation of life and individuality after the death of the body. I am leaving first principles and dealing with profounder mysteries. In so doing, I must assume, on the part of those who read me, a considerable familiarity with the phenomena of Spiritualism, and some previous exercise of thought as to the causes that underlie them.

Speaking to such only, I desire to clear the ground by a few preliminary considerations, the more necessary because a considerable portion of this work is devoted to an exclusive argument dealing only with one side of the question—the • return to earth of the spirits of departed humanity. I have no desire to stand committed to any narrow definition or limitation of the Intelligence at work, any more than I wish to ignore

the great weight of evidence that goes to show that in a large number of cases the Intelligent Operator is not the person he pretends to be, or else that he is very unfortunate in his attempts to make out his identity.

Speaking, as I do, almost on the threshold of a vast inquiry, albeit one in which I have spent some years with rare opportunities for forming an opinion—speaking, moreover, of the causes of things in themselves so various, in the methods of their presentation so protean, in their perpetual changefulness so perplexing—speaking, too, as one averse to theorising, especially on a subject so fruitful of fanciful hypothesis, I desire to say as little as possible. But it would be unfair to let this volume go forth without some words on other aspects of the question than those to which I have given prominence in my paper on *THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR*.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF INVESTIGATION.

It must be admitted at the outset of the argument that many perplexing questions are raised at every step of the investigation. The experiences of investigators are very various: the attitude of public opinion almost precludes fair ventilation and discussion of facts; the facts themselves are not such as can be published in many cases; and we have to reckon with an Intelligent Operator whose opinion and action are frequently the very reverse to what our own would be.

The gates are set ajar, and a motley company enters: we know little of, and most of us care less for, proper conditions of investigation; and we complicate an already perplexing subject by much careless folly.

It is this line of thought that I wish to pursue.

DIVERGENT RESULTS OF INVESTIGATORS.

The experiences of investigators of the phenomena called spiritual have been even more various than those of investiga-

tors of other obscure subjects. Some have tried for years, and have seen nothing that satisfies them. Others have been flooded with evidence that sweeps away doubt with the torrent-rush of conviction. Some have to take a world of trouble to get means of investigation; and when all has been done, are confronted only with a bewildering mass of illusive phenomena of which they can make nothing, which may mean much or little, but which certainly are not reducible to law. Others carry about with them their own means of investigation, and are not perplexed by any fear of deceit, at least on this side. Some bring to the inquiry a calm and evenly-balance mind, free alike from dogmatic scepticism and enthusiastic credulity. Others gulp down the most portentous phenomena without ever thinking of the conclusions to be drawn from them; and others, yet again, see nothing, hear nothing, know nothing, and shut tight the avenues through which alone knowledge is procurable.

ATTITUDE OF OPINION REPRESSES PUBLICATION OF FACTS.

No wonder, then, that, where experience is so various, opinion is equally divergent. It would be more than strange were it otherwise. The investigator too frequently is compelled by this state of general opinion to approach the study of the subject with a mind befogged by prejudice. If he be a man properly trained and educated to understand the abstruse questions involved in the study of the more recondite phenomena of psychological science, he will have spent most of his time in an atmosphere but little favourable to a candid consideration of the question it involves. The very works that he will have read will be the outcome of the study of insanity by those who have the strongest interest in presenting • a one-sided view of the question, and who, it is fair to presume, have no other view present to their minds. On true mental science he will have found no treatise that will enlighten him.

Of the mysteries of spirit and spirit-action he has everything to learn in the stern school of experience. He will hear the whole subject scorned, scouted, and branded by his associates as unclean, to be left severely alone by any one who values a scientific or even a social reputation.

Unclean, save the mark! As if any knowledge could by any possibility be unclean! As if it were more unclean for a man to learn to probe his own mind than to study the organs of his own body! As if he were not acting in obedience to the wisest of all advice, *Γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, *Know thyself*, in probing to the very bottom the mysteries of his own soul and of its relation to the souls of others, and to the Great Soul of the universe!

But this will be put aside with a scoff, and a significant hint that such ideas are fanatical and quixotic. His reading will supply him with instances of both social and scientific, possibly also (for such things have been) of theological persecution of men who have ventured to handle tabooed topics, or to push on the car of progress when a fossilised orthodoxy, whether in Science, Politics, or Religion, has decided to lock its wheels.

If his own mind be free from bias, he will find it uncommonly difficult to induce any of his scientific friends to tolerate the mention of a subject which they instinctively recognise as inimical to their own pretensions to the exclusive possession of exact knowledge. They will regard him as a dangerous man, as one who is a little erratic; and if a Mad Doctor gets near him, he will probably have him within the gates of his asylum before he is much older.

And so by degrees, if his determination survive this opposition, he will be driven in upon himself, and will reserve what he discovers for future use, or for the service of a later age, when men will have run their heads against hard facts so repeatedly that they will have ceased to view them as their fathers did. when the scorned delusion of his day will have become the great truth of the succeeding age. If he speaks at all, it will be of elementary points, which, though equally

scorned by their fathers, the present generation has grudgingly accepted, and endeavoured to hide or explain away.

Hence one universal result comes to pass. The entire cycle of truth is never publicly presented: only such fragments of it as are forced, by apparent accident, into publicity; here a little and there a little, as a Slade comes to make a special phenomenon matter of notoriety, and a Lankester helps on the work by an appeal to persecution by the law.

The coherent body of evidence for the central facts of Spiritualism is almost of necessity from this cause not public property.

THIS RESULTS ALSO FROM THE INHERENT NATURE OF THE
FACTS.

Moreover, the attitude of opinion, acting from without, finds in the nature of the facts an alay to repress free publicity. I am not speaking now of the mere physical phenomena that lie on the surface, and have nothing but the elusive method of their presentation to interfere with publicity. If a man does not get tired of replying to the fatuous string of questions that the outside world has so largely at command—"Why cannot you produce these phenomena here, there, now, at any time, in my own room, in a public hall, with a medium, without a medium, and so on, and so on? Why cannot I produce them? Why is a medium necessary? Why a circle?"—if he does not get tired of hearing and answering this vapid questioning, there is no reason why attention should not be drawn to phenomena of raps, or even to such a demonstrable fact as Psychography, with much persistence.

But it is different when, through the adit of these phenomena, he has penetrated within the veil to the causes that underlie them, or rather to the intelligence that governs them. He finds then, in the cases that most deeply impress him, that he

is face to face with the evidence on which is rested, rightly or wrongly, the great, the far-reaching claim of Spiritualism,—
 demonstration of perpetuated life after death, and of intercourse
 between the world of matter and the world of spirit.

Sometimes the evidence will come from an impersonal source, from some instructor who has passed through the plane on which individuality is demonstrable, but it will none the less impress him with the solemnity of its issues. More frequently it will come from a friend whose affection has survived the great change, and who reaches a hand from the other side to help the struggling seeker after truth.

In either case, the evidence will usually be treasured up, and not made public property. Experience of what was done with the green tree will not predispose him to any experiments with the dry. If the earthly things—the raps and the noises that the ear of sense can distinguish—if the earthly things be derided, who shall tell of the heavenly things? And so they are locked up in the inner recesses, and are produced, if at all, only in outline, and under a strong sense of duty, to one who has in him that yearning after truth, divinely implanted and spirit-nurtured, which makes it imperative on him that has, to give.

*Both from the nature of the evidence, and from the
 attitude of men towards it, the truth is only partially
 made public.*

THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR HAS TO BE RECKONED WITH.

There is another reason that imports much uncertainty into this special investigation. We are not dealing, as the astronomer, for instance, is, with that which is in itself fixed, which acts according to law more or less clearly known to us, and respecting which we have a body of fact from which we can proceed on our way of further observation and experiment. If the astronomer is concerned in observing the planet Mars,

- he knows where to turn his telescope; he has a mass of fact with regard to the planet ready to his hand; he can predict its position, changes, and variations with much certainty for any time to come: and he can correct errors in his observations that may be caused by atmospheric conditions; and, finally, if anything occurs to prevent his observation, or to render the planet invisible, he can tell you exactly what has happened and why his failure has occurred. He is the heir of the knowledge of ages past, and to that body of science his own observations attach themselves in orderly sequence, without any breach of continuity or any rude severance of connection.

It is far otherwise when the investigator comes to deal with spiritual science in its more esoteric aspects. There, at the outset, all is shifting, vague, and uncertain. There is little in the past that can guide him. For the sages of old wrote for the initiated, and were little inclined to scatter their pearls of wisdom. If their books are open to us, we have lost the key, and as guides they are practically worthless.

The observations of others which are accessible to the public are apparently conducted under such a variety of conditions that the results arrived at are conflicting on the surface, and tend rather to bewilderment than to edification. The atmospheric conditions are so variable and exercise so powerful an influence: the investigator is dependent on the aid of others who form his circle; and each one of these imports his own conditions of error into the investigation; these and other causes, none of them tabulated and marked for him on the chart of previous experience, render his early pursuit of knowledge liable to every fluctuating degree of error.

- And though increasing experience eliminates many of these deterrent influences: though he finds himself increasingly able to say how and why much occurs or does not occur, though he may even be able to *command* results where inferior agencies alone are concerned, still he will always find himself at last compelled to reckon with the Invisible Operator at the end of

the line. He has not to do with a fixed and changeless subject of investigation, an inert substance the constitution and properties of which are partially known to him, but with an Intelligent Being, who has his ideas, plans, and projects all unknown to the investigator; who has, moreover, his way of looking at things, which is far different from that which obtains among us; and who, if he be a worthy Guide, will not swerve from the purpose set before him.

If he have been fortunate enough to secure the co-operation of a worthy and sufficiently powerful spirit, who acts on principles of integrity, he will be confronted by a new problem. If he have not secured such a guide, then he will find the investigation beset with difficulty, and he must depend for his evidence on sources whence the supply is alike precarious, and, as second-hand, unsatisfactory. He will be tempted to abandon the pursuit, and probably will do so, unless some unexpected avenue opens out.

But assuming him to be in relation with a spirit of whose integrity, wisdom, and power he has satisfied himself, as it is his sacred duty to do before trusting to his keeping the mighty interests that are at stake, then he will have to consider that this intelligence has his plans and methods, with which he can only slightly interfere. He will be forced to decide whether he will allow evidence to be produced at the will of the controlling spirit: whether he will consent to remain, to all intents and purposes, the passive recipient of what is vouchsafed; or whether he will dictate his own conditions, prescribe what he wishes to be done, refuse what he does not understand, and so place himself in relation with some lower intelligence who will bow to his will. He may be well assured that the very fact of his being able to command and subjugate the intelligence that should guide and teach him is proof that he can learn nothing from so complaisant an instructor. He has driven away the spirit that could elevate, and has attracted one over whom he can lord it.

- It is to the latter course having been so frequently adopted that I trace much of the disfigurement and defilement of our modern Spiritualism. If the investigator be impelled—I use the term advisedly—to the other course: if he satisfy himself as to the moral consciousness of the intelligence at work, and be content to accept what it presented with full liberty to examine and try it when it is placed in evidence, but refraining from dictation and interference, the course is more or less clear.

He will find, indeed, that he has no power to command phenomena, or possibly even to demonstrate their existence to others on occasions when he most desires to do so. The variable conditions set up by each change in the circle will be found to be an absolute barrier to frequent admission of other friends; and on this head he will soon learn that he has to take his choice between following his own inclinations without success, and obeying the reasonable dictates of the Intelligent Operator, who knows far more about conditions than he does.

- I can recall many an occasion when the most earnest requests for permission to show certain facts to friends, to whom I would have sacrificed much to bring conviction, and whom it would have been a valued privilege to have associated with myself in the investigation, were refused again and again, and I have been forced, though most reluctantly, to acquiesce. No doubt each request of such a kind would be more readily granted were it possible so to arrange conditions under which investigations are conducted as to secure a reasonable certainty of success. No doubt as we grow wiser by repeated failure it will be less and less necessary to fence round our circles by such stringent methods of prohibition. As it is, so many causes of error intervene, that the most fruitful of all—the combination of new elements—must be avoided.

Were it not so, we should be perpetually reduced to the necessity of going back to first principles; anything like

progress would be impossible, and we should be "ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

The investigator, having gone so far, will find, furthermore, that he is being gradually withdrawn from the material plane of observation on which alone objective demonstration is to be had. Having passed through the hard phase in which he demanded—and most righteously demanded—satisfactory proof as a preliminary to further investigation, and having obtained it, he will find a strong desire on the part of spirit to rise, and to raise him, above the material plane. If the Intelligent Operator is one who has power to teach and guide, he will find that the physical phenomena are treated as "the mighty works" which are to form the material foundation—the "hay, straw, stubble" for the edifice of faith. He will be led, if possible, onward from the plane of scientific demonstration to the higher regions of moral and spiritual enlightenment, and will be led to search into deeper mysteries—*verum cognoscere causas*—so far as to learn that the fleeting phenomena of this world of sense are but the earthly reflections of the enduring realities of the world of spirit. He will be taught to trace the link between the crudities of human forms of faith and the eternal verities, of which only the vaguest outlines are comprehensible by his finite mind. He will find that all paths that lead upward lead in the end to higher religious truth, to a higher conception of duty, and to a nearer view of God.

By such methods his inner self will be purified, his conceptions of life, not as a matter of threescore years and ten on this earth, but as an imperishable and eternal possession, to be utilised and cultivated or to be wasted and destroyed, will be ennobled and elevated. If he be in any sense a true man, he will be morally, and in the very highest religious sense, the better for the training. He will see more clearly what his obligations are, and so will be a better citizen and a truer man in all his social relations. He will have a clearer conception

of his privileges, and will be the more ready to vindicate his birthright. And he will have learned that, whether he wills it or not, he is the arbiter of his own destiny, that he lives in the piercing sight of the world of spirit, and he will increasingly rise above the meannesses and pettinesses that disfigure our modern life, and the anthropomorphic conceptions that form our modern theology.

Far more than this. He will find as he goes on, that his early notions of literal demonstration and scientific analysis are becoming impossible. He will see that the subtler truths of spirit—or rather the higher conceptions of spiritual truth—lend themselves to no such methods; and that they even elude the hard limits of human language, and find expression or adumbration (if at all) in the language of symbolism and allegory. More frequently they are intuitively perceived, and elude absolutely and entirely the crude methods of human expression.

And if he penetrates far enough, he will find himself in a region for which his present embodied state unfits him: a region in which the very individuality is merged, and the highest and subtlest truths are not locked within one breast, but emanate from representative companies whose spheres of life are interblended.

The will of the Intelligent Operator in the best cases is added to causes before enumerated, so as to render the free dissemination of truth difficult.

These causes combine to make a full publication of cases, which seem to those best able to judge to prove spirit-identity, well-nigh impossible.

I have said nothing of the sentimental side of the argument: of the impatience that a number of investigators who have by patient waiting obtained their results,—of the impatience that such reasonably feel at being compelled again and again to begin *de novo* by the repeated introduction of fresh elements

into their circle. Nor have I touched on the stronger impatience of those who have intercourse with their departed friends, and who live, as in a risen life, in that sacred consciousness, at being interviewed by some pragmatic person or even by some very earnest but incompetent investigator, and being forced to produce evidence which wrings their very inmost souls for the satisfaction of a man for whose convictions pro or con they care, except on abstract principles of universal philanthropy, extremely little. It is easy to say that "to whom much is given, of them shall much be required." But this is much, very much, and, as a rule, it is not given.

Nor have I touched upon the extreme, the almost insuperable difficulty of putting into the syllogisms of cold logic, or even into such exact statements as a hostile critic claims, evidence that frequently appeals more to the heart than to the head, and which is best and safest precisely in proportion as it is least reducible within those hard and fast limits. Such evidence must appeal to another class of inquirers, and perhaps to a later age of enquiry, when the rough work of preparation, the ploughing and harrowing of the unpromising soil, has been done by the pioneers who are hardy enough and persistent enough to do it.

But, passing from the difficulties inherent in the subject itself, there are other causes that tend to make public evidence hard to be had.

THE GATES BEING AJAR, A MOTLEY CROWD RUSHES IN.

The world from which disembodied spirits return to us is very much like our own. The denizens of it are of varying degrees of progression; and those, unfortunately for us, who are least progressive, least developed, least spiritual, and most material and earthly, hover around the confines, and rush in when the gates are set ajar.

• We have small reason to complain of this. It is our own option to seek intercourse with the world of spirit; and we are certainly doing our best to keep up the supply of unprogressed and undeveloped spirits who are perpetually passing from our state to that with which we voluntarily open communication. ✓Of course we reap what we have sown; that is an eternal law.

Our criminals, for some of whom we are responsible both in life and death,—for we provide the best possible conditions for their production and nurture, and, when the full measure of their iniquity is consummated, we considerably facilitate their departure from us into the world of spirit,—our criminals we have always with us.

The dwellers in our lanes and alleys, for whom we make a decent life impossible: the victims of our lusts and debaucheries, whom our conditions of life drive, like the poor sheep that they are, to inevitable sin and shame—these scapegoats of advanced civilisation (the civilisation of the later days of the Roman Empire), for whom we have made spiritual life a thing not even intelligible, and distasteful were it even understood,—these we have too, answering the first call, only too ready to come back to the only place they care for.

They who have lived the life of incarnation without progress: they who have hoarded their treasure here, and have no home elsewhere; they who are tied to earth by any of the bonds that chain down the spirit; they for whom heaven has no meaning, and who would find their highest gratification on the earth that they should have quitted for ever; those, in short, whom we, by our vicious civilisation, by all the methods whereby worldly wealth and power preys on and degrades those who are the ministers of its lusts and material cravings and necessities; those whom we have reduced to the level of mere physical machines, and robbed of the precious birthright of spiritual progress and true life—these find the gates ajar and vex us.

I sometimes wonder where those, who believe that man has a soul and a future before him, think that he goes when they lose sight of him. If they propound to me the notion that the soul is in some purgatorial state, or some antechamber of expectation, awaiting reunion with the body that the crack of doom will miraculously recombine, I have nothing to say. We have no common ground on which we can meet. I am concerned with those who accept and understand the rational scheme of progression that awaits the soul newly released from the prison-house of the body. Among these are many who are distressed by the vagaries of spirits who communicate with them, and who, in perplexity and bewilderment, are inclined to refer the whole vexed question to diabolic action.

I would say to such, Why do you import into the argument a new element of disturbance? If there be a Devil such as you postulate, but do not by any means prove, or even give any fair evidence-for, I can understand the whole mystery of evil; and I should, if I believed it, be very anxious as to my future, not knowing what pranks such an omnipotent fiend might not elect to play with one who habitually meddles with his spiritual domain. If I did not believe, as I do, that this very human fiend is the creation as much of Milton and Dante as of the earlier conceptions of the Pentateuch, I should find him, as the appropriate Prince of many embodied fiends that we have successfully developed on this earth, a very present cause of trouble.

But is there not enough embodied folly, roguery, iniquity, vice, and sin, the product of our own civilisation, the outcome of our society, ay, even the consequence of what it pleases us to call our religion, perpetually going into the world of spirit to account for all we see and deplore?

✓ We are agreed that man survives physical death. We are agreed that he is an accountable being, who will have to render account for the deeds done in the body. He must,

therefore, be the same man in spirit that he was in the flesh, or where is the possibility of judgment?

Well, what was he? and what does Holy Writ say? "He that is unjust is unjust still; and he that is filthy is filthy still." Carry on the argument, and the conclusion is inevitable. We have elements set loose from this world of ours day by day, endowed too, with perpetuated life and energy, sufficient to make it not only probable but certain that, once we establish communication with the disembodied state, they will return to vex and harass us, as we know they do.

We are face to face once more with the working of inevitable law. "As a man sows, so will he also reap." We are sowing the wind with much daily energy, and we reap the whirlwind in due course.

This of itself is a grave cause of complication; and it is aggravated by our own folly and neglect of reasonable precautions in investigation.

NEGLECT OF CONDITIONS IN INVESTIGATING.

Most of the facilities for investigation which an ordinary investigator finds at his disposal are such as seem to be constructed for the very purpose of bewildering one who possesses this mysterious psychic power; and some, I fear, who only pretend to its possession, advertise that, for a small remuneration, they will place the public in relation with the world of spirit. This of itself is, I should hope, a transitory state of affairs. Far be it from me to utter a word that could even seem to disparage the work done by public mediums. I am conscious that it is not held in the estimation that it should be; and that perhaps as much from the obloquy brought upon it by some whose frauds have discredited it, as from any other cause. When it is discharged as I have seen it, with a sense of responsibility and an honest desire to bring to the investigator such evidence as is possible, much good is effected.

But too often what happens is this: A number of persons assemble, most of them densely ignorant of any conditions to be observed; some animated by mere curiosity, a few by a dumb desire to see what can be had through the only source open to them as evidence of a future life: all, in nine cases out of ten, unfit, for one or more of many causes, for the solemn work they have undertaken. The link between the two worlds, the line that the Intelligent Operator must use, is out of order, overwrought, in anything but a satisfactory condition. How should it be otherwise? Anyone who can spare five shillings runs to him for proof of immortality! The burden is more than he can bear; and if he be a model of integrity, a very storehouse of psychic power, he becomes distressed and broken down. His nerves are shattered; he is open to the assaults of all the malicious, tricky spirits that his vocation brings him in contact with, and, as a consequence, he is in grievous peril—through our ignorance and folly as much as through the ever-present danger of his vocation—of moral, or mental, or physical deterioration. Then comes the necessary sequel: temptation, obsession, fraud, buffoonery, and all that we so lament as associated with phenomenal Spiritualism.

These are the circumstances under which a large proportion of those who desire to gather evidence respecting the intercourse between the two worlds are forced to get it. I am astonished at the results. I know of many cases in which unmistakable evidence has, under these most faulty conditions, been brought home to the enquirer. I repeat that I am astonished that any evidence should be worth counting that is produced under such conditions; and I do not wonder that, as a rule, the evidence is faulty, and that the conditions set up and perpetuated by us result in much that is discreditable, and even shameful.

In so saying, I have in my mind many a scandal that has brought shame on the cause that I advocate; and I am not so

much inclined to blame the perpetrators of the iniquity, though they must bear their righteous burden, as I am the folly and stupidity that make such scandals possible.

And even in circles where better conditions may be expected we find the gravest neglect of precautions that experience has shown to be indispensable.

We know that out of our bodies, in some mysterious manner, by some chemistry unknown to us, are provided the means by which the invisible operators work. Yet few consider that they are bound to prepare themselves in any way for the part they have to play. A copious dinner and a free supply of stimulant are considered to be a reasonable preparation for "an hour's communion with the dead." And then they grumble because they do not get their "dead" of so high quality as they would desire! Or, worse still, they welcome anything with hilarious merriment, and embrace the "dear spirits" as if they were the very Angels of Light.

A melancholy picture, too often drawn by those who would cast a cheap sneer upon us. Let it for once be painted by one who desires only to point its morals.

That is not the way to investigate Spiritualism; nor is the Intelligent Operator to blame for results that our own folly produces.

These, the results—alas! the only results that the general public knows as Spiritualism, are by common consent undesirable. If the opening of communication between the two worlds results necessarily in this, by all means let us have the gates closed at once. That it does not so result of necessity I hope to show; and I trust that the efforts that are now being made, and the general spread of knowledge on the subject, will result in wiping away at once and for ever this bar to investigation, and in opening out better avenues for intercourse between us and the world of spirit.

I put it, then, to the candid reader, whether it is any cause for reasonable surprise that, having regard to those spirits, the

dwellers on the threshold who vex and plague us, and to those on our side who are best known to the public as exponents of experimental Spiritualism, there should be a deal of nonsense and folly current in its name? Is *any* evidence that is precise and clear to be expected under such conditions? Is any intercourse to be looked for with any spirit that can elevate and ennoble man? any proof evolved in orderly and exact method? anything, in short, save that questionable benefit of proving that man's vices and follies survive his death, and that there is no monopoly of those qualities on this earth?

Let us purge away from our side these blots which defile our communion with the world of spirit before we charge its manifestations on a Devil, or associate them with the vagaries of soulless and irresponsible elementaries.

AGENCIES OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE DEPARTED.

Here I hope I may be pardoned if I append a few words almost of personal explanation, which are demanded from me if I would make clear the position I occupy: a duty, as it seems to me, incumbent on everyone who presumes to address the public.

It is not for me to deny that there are at work in Spiritualism agencies other than the departed spirits of our kind. If I insist on the action of these human spirits, it is because I think I see need to do so in order to preserve the balance of truth: not because I have any intention of ignoring the action of spirits below the plane of humanity, or of minimising the undoubted power of trans-corporeal action of the embodied human spirit.

I may perhaps be permitted to say that, at a time when I considered it opportune, I did what lay in my power to draw the attention of investigators to both these points, then almost entirely unthought of by English Spiritualists. It seemed to me that our lines of investigation were too cramped, our view not sufficiently wide; our modern self-complacency was

turning its back on what the past had done to throw light on these vexed problems; and it was time to point out that the world of spirit is capacious, and that there is room in it for something more than the whole family of man.

The action of sub-human spirits, and the part they are alleged to play in Spiritualism, ably and enthusiastically set forth by students of the occult literature of the East, popularised in America by Madame H. P. Blavatsky in her great work *ISIS UNVEILED*, and since then advocated in England by a little band of writers hardly less able and energetic, has not needed any other help to secure it from oblivion or neglect, I have not lost sight of that side of the question, even when I have endeavoured to redress the balance by drawing prominent attention to what I hold to be an infinitely more important element—the action of departed human spirits. I should apologise for introducing a word about so unimportant a matter as my own opinions, but I have no desire to be credited with any change of thought which has not taken place, or to seem to be one-sided in my view. I hope I may disavow that supposition without laying myself open to any charge of egotism.

I have brought forward a small portion of the evidence that I have collected for the return of the departed for a plain reason. It is this: For some time past there has seemed to me to be creeping over a prominent section of Spiritualists, the most able, the best informed, and the most active in informing others, an inclination to what in a doctor I should call *Specialism*. Just as the Specialist who deals with the heart refers all symptoms of illness in his patients to some fault in that organ, while his neighbour who deals with the lungs finds in them the root of all evil that comes under his ken, so these Specialists seemed inclined to refer everything that has occurred in our experience of the domain of spirit to any cause except what I hold to be the chief of all—the action of departed human spirits. That, the most potent factor, seemed

to me to be relegated to the lowest place, as, for instance, it is in *Isis Unveiled*, and to be practically ignored, though theoretically and hypothetically admitted as a possible and latent element, by an influential and active body, most of whom would call themselves, and all of whom would be called by the outside world, Spiritualists.

My own view was different, and I thought it well to set it forth. In a prolonged experience—the length of which is not measured by time so properly as by the rapidity with which events have crowded one upon the other, so that day and night were set thick with them—in an experience at least as long and as diversified as that of most of those who arrive at other conclusions, I have found abundant evidence for the action of human spirits, and comparatively little for the action of any sub-human spirits. I am aware that spirit is not conterminous with humanity, and I know that spirit exists on an inferior plane to that on which we live. But I believe it impinges rarely and slightly on us, and personally I know very little of its operation.

I know that the power of the human will is great—of the trained and developed human will, that has regained by long practice its lost birthright of power, I believe the potency to be of unknown magnitude. But the exercise of Will is little known among Western nations; and, as a factor in the production of these phenomena, I believe it to be of the very slightest value.

I know, too, that the liberated spirit of the Psychic has powers with which Spiritualists, as a body, are but slenderly acquainted. I have had some considerable acquaintance with this trans-corporeal action of spirit, both in my own person and with others. I have had grave reason to form the opinion that, in our present state of ignorance, it is an extremely dangerous experiment; one, too, that is very rarely successfully practised, inasmuch as natural gifts must be supplemented by a power of concentration of will very rarely attained by

any Western people. I have no belief that this enters as an indistinguishable factor into the production of these phenomena. Such few cases as are attributable to it are well marked and readily distinguishable.

I profess once more my belief that these subjects—the action of inferior spirits, the trans-corporeal action of the incarnated human spirit, and the potency of the human will—are worthy of our deepest study. Not until we have solved some, at least, of the mysteries that beset them, shall we penetrate far in our study of the phenomena called spiritual. No one-sided view will embrace the field of Spiritualism, and no student of the subject can afford to overlook causes which may be so influential in the production of abnormal phenomena as these.

I, at least, should like to know more of the powers inherent in my own spirit, and of the results that may be produced by their development. Therein, I feel convinced, lies the key to many a mystery, and I regard no time that can be spent on such self-analysis as misplaced.

But I should be doing what I am ready to blame in others, I should be one-sided and blind, were I to neglect to note what lies immediately before me, what has been infinitely the most prominent factor in the spiritual phenomena that I have observed—the action of the spirits of the departed.

For these, among other reasons, I wrote and now publish, with additions and appendices, the paper which bears the title of THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR.

RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION.

One other reason influenced me. It has seemed to me that some of us have been for a long time past so much occupied with the husk and shell of Spiritualism that we have lost sight of the inner truth.

Now it is to the last degree important that the phenomena of Spiritualism should be placed on a basis of scientific,

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demonstration, and no pains are too great to spend on so desirable an object. To this end it is especially desirable that any who possess psychic power should be encouraged to devote it designedly and by exercise of will to the elaboration of one particular experiment, so as to rise superior to conditions, so far as that may be. We have every reason to believe that the simpler objective phenomena can be so brought under control. The great difficulty is one of time and patience; and unfortunately, during the time spent in this preparation the powers which furnish the medium with his subsistence are unproductive; and few private individuals, who have nothing to gain, can be expected to give up time and labour to such an end.

The first step towards this result has yet to be taken; and this is to secure some one who possesses the power, to remove him from the necessity of exercising his gift for gain, to seclude him from external influences, and to give him opportunity of cultivating gifts that are innate, and of supplementing them by the power of his trained will.

The first step towards rescuing what the outside world knows as Spiritualism from charlatanry and imposture, and placing it on a basis where scientifically accurate results may be expected, will be taken when some such method is adopted. It remains, however, to be done.

But there are other sides of the subject that are not touched by any such methods as these. One of them I have pointed out in my paper which forms the bulk of this volume—the religious aspect of the question.

Ever since I became intimately acquainted with the subject, I have been deeply impressed with some serious considerations respecting it.

One is, that there is an organised plan on the part of spirits who govern these manifestations—of which all that we can get is but a fragmentary view—to act on us, and on the religious thought of the age. In this I presume the methods employed

are analogous to those that have been used in other transition epochs.

Another is, that as soon as we escape from the very external surroundings of the subject—an escape that some persons, however, have not yet made—we are brought in some way or other into relation with this plan, or some phase of it.

A third is, that there is an impulse and yearning in certain persons who are brought into relation with the world of spirit, which enables them to receive and assimilate what to others has no beauty that they should desire it. I have recorded elsewhere my own personal experience of this; and the truth is, that all new epochs have been introduced by some such means. They have dovetailed one into the other; and there have been of necessity pioneers, often men in advance of their age, who have caught up the courier-fire, and have handed it on to those who come after them.

And, lastly, I see in this organised influence of spirit on those who have the inward preparation precisely what I can trace in other epochs of the world's history, when, as now, old truths have lost their energy, when they require re-stating, and when the progressive thinkers, who always bear the brunt of obloquy in introducing new truth, are receiving its seeds into mental soil that has been prepared for its germination.

He is but a blind student of the history of the development of religious truth who does not see this. All truths, *i.e.*, all human conceptions of essential truth, pass through phases such as those which the human body, for instance, undergoes. Growth, vigour, decay, death, recombination, and reconstruction—these are the stages of progressive change; and the processes are similar in respect of the development of truth in all cases.

The truth that has sufficed the wants of one age, and in course of time has received glosses, explanations, and comments, which have obscured its original simplicity, impaired its adaptability to daily use, and encumbered it with

a mass of fallacy, this adulterated truth fails any longer to suffice the wants or meet the cravings of a succeeding age. The times have changed. Man has progressed. Pioneers of a new epoch have shadowed forth their ideas, the message with which they are charged. Destructive criticism has dealt with the old truths, and, albeit unable to touch them in so far as they are fragmentary statements of eternal truth, has found plenty of weak places in man's glosses and additions.

And so "the old order changeth, giving place to new." Fashion reigns in the realm of thought as elsewhere; and by degrees a new view of the old truth is presented, a new combination has been effected, and truth is presented in a more acceptable guise, and perhaps in fairer proportions to those whose inner natures crave enlightenment.

This process, acting throughout the mighty chain of sequence from the Supreme Inspirer and Originator, Whose eye is over all His works, through His various intermediary agencies, by whom He reaches these lower worlds, and again through those of us who on earth are prepared to receive, assimilate, and state the truth, down to the humblest recipient who asks and receives spiritual food—this process is one specially exemplified in all great crises in the world's history, such as that in the midst of which we live.

It is only in the light of some such explanation, as this that the history of the world's progress can be grasped. The story has been the same at all great epochs. It was so when the Christ came to shed on an age of midnight darkness the strongest gleam of light of which we have any record. Those who should have been most ready to receive and welcome the new truth, whose office pointed them out as its natural recipients, and who, by virtue of that office, were bound to be its foster-fathers, were foremost in stifling its voice and crucifying its Herald.

Never, perhaps, has it been otherwise. Those who by their position should be prominent in the ever-pressing work

of reform, in whatever department of human life, are the last to welcome what, almost of necessity, rises outside of their order, and comes to them with no sanction of orthodoxy. It is outside of the priestly caste, beyond the pale of the prescribed succession, that the voice crying in the wilderness is first heard. And it is they only who feel the need, who have within them the desire, "the prepared heart," that catch its first accents. As the new truth is popularised, when it is assimilated to the dominant tone of thought, and fitted to men's needs, as it never is at first, then the message spreads, and obloquy is succeeded by what is much harder to bear—prosperity.

It does not require much discernment to see that we are in the inception of one of these great epochs. An age is drawing to its close, and a new epoch is beginning, in which new views of truth will prevail, and many an old fallacy will expire. Peace to their ashes! We have so many that we can well spare a few. Those who succeed us will see the phases of the conflict as we who are in the thick of it cannot. The fight will be prolonged, for all new truth is born in anguish and distress, and is ushered into life amid a scene of contest and battling of opposing forces. When it is over, the world will awake to find itself the possessor of a new heritage.

One of the earlier methods of this presentation of new truth, I believe, we find in that tangled, bizarre movement known as Modern Spiritualism; so repulsive in some of its aspects, so ennobling in others; so glorious in design, so marred by man's ignorance and perversity; so pregnant with possibilities of blessing if man will but use the means presented to him; so sure to fail, as many another plan for his benefit has failed before, if he hardens his heart, and sets his face against the boon; or if, as seems only too probable, he scoffs at and tramples it underfoot.

These feelings have influenced me in doing what I can to draw attention to the higher and more strictly religious

aspects of Spiritualism. What I have said is but a hint of what I feel to be the projected outcome of the subject, if it have free course. It will probably pass through many phases before it finally succeeds or fails in its mission.

But, meantime, it is acting as a very wholesome leaven on the whole mass of contemporary thought, and influencing even those who are most unconscious of its power, and who would most scornfully reject its overt claims, though they cannot resist its silent influence. It is liberalising opinion in many unlikely directions ; it is making men braver, more self-reliant, more manly, by teaching them to dare to exercise that noblest of their hereditary privileges, that birthright which none may sell and not fall into sin—the right to think for themselves. The beams of the sun of spirit are loosening the icy barriers that hem in the arctic climes of thought, whether in politics, religion, or social life ; they are making it possible to breathe in those hyperborean regions, and to hope that it may not always be night there. And they are shedding on many a receptive soul light that is to it the very “ dayspring from on high,” the herald and forerunner of the brighter light that is to come.

What modifications the external form may take I do not venture to predict. Sufficient that, for good or for evil, there is at work in our midst a mighty influence, which it is the part of the wise man to recognise and, if possible, to control.

THE INTELLIGENT OPERATOR AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE.

*(A Paper read before the British National Association of
Spiritualists, on Monday, December 16, 1878.)*

It was Mr. Crookes¹ who described the Intelligence that is at the root of the "phenomena called Spiritual" as "The Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line." Unwilling to commit himself to anything definite, he, with true scientific caution, borrowed a simile from telegraphy, and used terms strictly non-committal.

I have ventured to employ the phrase as the title of this paper, because it admirably states the position whence I start on a consideration of the question of Spirit Identity.

SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY.

My business is simple, if not easy. I am not about to use any arguments to prove the existence of the soul. The eminent "Spiritualist without the spirits" (as it pleased Captain Burton to describe himself), who preceded me on this platform, was, in respect of soul, agnostic. He would not, indeed, interfere with other people's souls, nor even go so far as to "assert that spirits do not exist"; but, for himself, "having managed to live for some years without what is popularly called a soul," or, as I should prefer to say, without being conscious of such a possession, he proposes to continue soulless to the end, which, having regard to the

¹ Now Sir William Crookes

allotted age of man, is more or less imminent. Then I doubt not he will find his soul, and live, I trust, the same vigorous and energetic individual that he now is.¹

Well, I, on my own account, do "assert that spirits do exist." And I presume, further, that most of us are pretty comfortable as to the existence of our souls, whatever we may be as to their condition. I shall not stay to debate a question which is fundamental to our very existence as a body of Spiritualists.

Furthermore, I shall re-state, without argument, another proposition on which we are agreed—*viz.*: That there exists a force conveniently called PSYCHIC, and (*pace* Captain Burton) not conveniently called ZOO-ELECTRICITY,² inasmuch as the experiments of men of science, so far as they prove anything respecting its nature, show that electricity is about the worst term to apply to the force in question. Still less conveniently is the action of this force described as MAGNETISM,³ a word already appropriated in quite another sense.

And yet once more, I assume that we have evidence that this force is governed by an Intelligence which, in many demonstrable cases, some of which I shall quote, is not that of any person present at the time of the experiment under notice.

THE NATURE OF THE INTELLIGENCE.

Of what nature is the Intelligence? This is the precise question to which I shall try to suggest materials for an answer.

¹ "Personally, I ignore the existence of soul and spirit, feeling no want of a self within a self, an I within an I. If it be a question of words, and my *ego*, or subject, as opposed to the *non-ego*, or object, or my individuality, the concurrence of conditions which differentiates me from others, be called a soul, then I have a soul, but not a soul proper. For some years, however, I have managed to live without what is popularly called a soul; and it would be hard to find one violently thrust into the recusant body"—*Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.*

² *Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.*

³ *Captain Burton before the B.N.A.S.*

A full answer would involve a complete statement of the various theories which have commended themselves to various speculators.

I should need to give reasons for putting aside that strange theory that the force itself is responsible for all, instead of being to the Intelligent Operator merely the correlative of the electric force, which enables the telegraphic clerk to transmit his message.

I should have to discuss the devil theory, and even to inquire into the origin and character of the Arch-fiend.

Elementals and elementaries would claim a hearing, and I should need to investigate the exact extent to which they are responsible for some of the vagaries which the Intelligent Operator does undoubtedly perplex us with.

I should be forced to go into that bewildering field of investigation which lies nearer home, and inquire how far the liberated spirit of the Psychic, acting unconsciously to himself, can communicate knowledge which in normal moments he is profoundly unconscious of possessing.

All this I manifestly cannot do now. I shall treat psychic force as the mere instrument that it is. I shall ignore the devil and all his works for the time being. I shall leave untouched the question of the action of sub-human spirits and of the action of those spirits that are still embodied on this earth, and I shall pin myself down on this occasion to the narrower issue that lies immediately before me.

IS THE INTELLIGENCE HUMAN ?

It is obvious to note at starting that, with so few exceptions as only to illustrate the rule, the Intelligent Operator claims to be human. He is a member, according to his own story, of that great human family, whereof the majority has passed into the world of spirit, whence they—still the same men, with the same interests, and the same affections, with an unbroken

continuity of individual existence—communicate with us, the minority, who are passing through the phase of incarnation which they have done with, once they have emerged from the prison-house of the body.

What ground is there for declining to accept this general statement as true? Several suspicious circumstances combine to throw doubt upon particular cases. 3. 027

ASSUMPTION OF GREAT NAMES.

The free use made of names great and honoured amongst men is one of the most suspicious ; especially when we find, as is too frequently the case, that they are made the sponsors for pretentious nonsense, bombastic platitude, or egregious twaddle ; still more so when the claims put forward break down on the simplest examination. Such baseless assumptions breed a spirit of suspicion which is apt to generalise from single instances, and allege universal imposture. This is to rush to another extreme. It must, however, strike any rational observer that this prevalence of illiterate Shakespeares and twaddling Swedenborgs, of scientific names that the world holds in the highest esteem, who return only to demonstrate their present ignorance of the first principles of that science which they once illuminated and adorned on earth, is strong presumptive evidence that the Intelligent Operator is not, in all cases, the person he pretends to be.

To what are we to attribute this? Is it to the absence of scientific knowledge on the part of the Psychic, and to the fact that his ignorance is the measure of the knowledge that can be conveyed through him? That, at any rate, is not always the case.¹ Is it to the mysterious conditions that beset the spirit who seeks to resume relations with our world, and cause unintentional error in the matter of his communications?

¹ See a remarkable narrative by Mr. Barkas in the "Psychological Review," October, 1878.

Or is it that there are in the world of spirit, as with us, those who delight to strut in borrowed plumes, and to pass themselves off for something great and good, being but sorry stuff after all? Can spirits, being, as we know, able to obtain access to sources of human information,¹ get up their facts and give such travesty of them as they can remember: reckoning, not without some show of reason, on the credulity which will accept any plausible story, or on their power to psychologise the investigator, or so to mix up fancy, frauds, and fact as to bewilder and perplex him?

These are some ideas that must have occurred to many of us. To whatever cause it may be attributed, the manifestly baseless assumption of great names goes far to cast ridicule and suspicion on the claims of the Intelligent Operator in certain cases.

ABSENCE OF PRECISION IN STATEMENT.

Another cause of doubt is the extreme difficulty that is usually found in getting any facts precisely given, especially facts that are certainly external to the knowledge of the sitters. There is a general haziness about the messages, where there is not positive error in the statements made; and it is extremely difficult to get anything like definite and precise facts plainly put, unless this be insisted on as a preliminary to further colloquy. This was my plan. I used for a long time to refuse to hold any converse with a spirit from whom I could not first obtain some plain facts that I could verify, or that carried on their surface evidence of probability. I had perplexed myself by reading hazy messages in the works and journals of Spiritualism, until I came to doubt the identity of all communicating spirits. I found great trouble in getting what I wanted, but I persistently stuck to my point

¹ See Appendix I.

until, by determined exercise of will, by refusing to have anything to do with spirits that declined my method, and, above all, by the good fortune of being able to enlist the co-operation of a spirit in whose integrity and power I had the perfect confidence which repeated trial and long experience alone can give, I did in the end get my proof.

Having got my facts, I found them accurate in all cases when I was able to verify them. They were at any rate true. I do not pretend that this fact proves anything as to the pretensions of the particular spirit who gives them, beyond establishing a favourable presumption. I have reason to believe, from what I know of spirit action, that all such facts might be got up and retailed to me. Against this I have to say that the facts in question were assuredly unknown to myself: and, if they were so got up, we have a very curious point before us. They bore, however, no appearance of deceit, and I have full confidence that no systematic course of imposture, such as this argument contemplates, would have been permitted by the controlling agency.

This confidence, born of experience, I can no more convey to others than I can impart the reliance on the integrity of an old and tried friend which I have built up for myself by the outcome of year after year of intimate association. But it is a very powerful factor in my argument. "And so it is in numberless cases outside of those within my knowledge. There are multitudes of private circles—the world has no notion how many—in which evidence of the return of those who have gone before is presented day by day, through years of intimate association, to the minds of those who are best, nay, who alone are fitted to judge of its true value. It is this reiteration of proof that the private circle furnishes which carries such full conviction. The promiscuous circle, from the very nature of its constitution, can hardly ever give it, and then only in an inferior degree.

CONTRADICTORY AND ABSURD MESSAGES.

Another cause which has strengthened the inherent feeling of antecedent improbability with which most of us start, is the mass of contradictions in the messages, and the general air of unreality that very frequently pervades them. It seems unreal and unlikely that a friend with whom our converse was that of soul to soul should appear for a moment only at a promiscuous séance to give the briefest passing word of salutation, or to cause the poor mourner to vex himself as to the identity of his friend, if not to feel disgusted at an apparent attempt to sport with his feelings. It is not thus, we sadly think, that our friend would have spoken, had he really come back to us. And the improbability becomes stronger as we dwell on the cases too well known where contradictions and grotesque absurdities, due for aught we know to difficulties that beset the very method of communication, as much as to intentional deception, have demonstrated at least error. From these the contagion of doubt overspreads all. The best cases are, from their very nature, unknown to the public, and those only where evidence is least conclusive become generally known. Nor will this great difficulty be overcome until the time when antecedent improbability has yielded to experience, and observers can contribute their stone to the cairn of evidence, without the certainty of having it flung back in their face by some shallow sciolist who decides dogmatically that such things are contrary to the laws of nature, and therefore cannot be.

CONDITION UNDER WHICH GOOD EVIDENCE IS OBTAINED.

It is not surprising, then, that it is only when conditions are scrupulously guarded that reliable evidence is obtained. In the seclusion of the family circle there occur repeated cases

in which there are the strongest reasons for believing that the spirit is what it pretends to be—very many in which there remains no room for doubt. Such cases, I repeat, are too sacred for publicity. They do not find their way into print ; and even if they do, no coldly precise record, such as would find favour with an antagonistic critic, can give to him the conviction that comes from many a little turn of expression, or reference to scenes long past, or possibly from nothing more tangible than the intuitive certainty that this is indeed our friend, though we should find it as hard to prove it as some, even in our own days, have found it to prove their own identity.

Under such conditions, where sincerity absolutely prevails on our side as well as on theirs, when we have taken care to present ourselves both “pure in heart and sound in head” for the “hour’s communion” with the friends gone before, the spiritual atmosphere is pure, and we feel it. There is an air of moral consciousness, of straightforwardness, that gives reality to what is done, and predisposes us to believe that we are not the victims of an organised system of cruel imposture, prolonged over a period of many years, and trifling with the most sacred subjects as well as with the tenderest feelings of the heart. The spirit that could so act, and yet maintain an air of sincerity and even sublimity in tone, must surely be the very devil transformed into an angel of light. I have no such fear as that ; and it is under circumstances such as these that proofs come which are sheet anchors to hold on by in the midst of much that is shifty and uncertain.

Under these conditions, too, are given the prolonged series of tests and proofs of the continued existence of an individuality once familiar to us in the body, which form a cumulative argument of great cogency in favour of spirit-identity.

There is no one but notes in his intimate friends traits of character and points of personal peculiarity for which he would look as evidence of identity after long absence. Such are the tokens by which he would recognise his friend : unnoticed by

others, they would be to him proof positive. It is these little tokens, so convincing to those who find them, so hard to put on paper, so impossible to analyse and dissect in public, that come in the privacy of the domestic circle, repeated again and again in many a form, until doubt simply dies of inanition.¹

VALUE OF CORROBORATIVE TESTIMONY.

When, moreover, in addition to reiterated evidence derived through one channel, similar evidence, slightly varied by varied conditions, is obtained through an independent channel, the weight of the testimony is much increased. When, further, this is so far multiplied as to be produced on all occasions when intercourse is sought with the world of spirit; when the human instrument's fallibility is corrected by the unimaginative record of the photographic camera, a chain of evidence is completed which only the novelty of the subject permits prepossession to ignore.

Such a case was recorded by Mrs. Fitzgerald² in a paper read before the B.N.A.S. on November 18, 1878, and there are many who, if they would imitate her disinterested example, could give corroborative testimony from the experience of their own private lives.

Evidence such as is frequently adduced to establish spirit-identity; evidence given through various channels, by various methods, and extending over a long period of time; evidence, too, be it remembered, that is usually fragmentary, for the obvious reason that those who enjoy the blessing of renewed intercourse with their departed friends are not usually persons of trained legal minds, nor are they employed in getting up a case for our courts of law: evidence such as is produced by these methods would establish in fair minds a

¹ Appendix II.

² *Spiritualist*, Nov. 22, 1878

strong presumption of spirit-identity, were it not for the inherent improbability to which I have alluded (and which is due to theological errors of belief as much as to any other cause), and for the perpetually recurrent cases of fraud which defile and bring contempt on a great truth.

Admitting, however, to the full the weight of these considerations, and knowing, as I do, that certain classes of mind will give them a weight quite disproportionate to their real value, I claim, with entire confidence, that spirit-identity is a proven fact. I am about to state some few cases that are within my own knowledge, and I shall refer to others which I have already published.

In this part of my work I must claim indulgence if I do not give names and facts at length in every case. I pledge myself to the exact accuracy of every statement I make, and I will gladly satisfy any private inquirer respecting any case, if I can reasonably do so. But I am holden from the publication of names and addresses in some cases by the knowledge that friends of the departed are still surviving, and that I must respect their feelings. I have no right to invade the sacred privacy of the memory of their dead, even in such a cause as that of the demonstration of what is loosely called Immortality.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

It is now four years since my mind was so greatly vexed on this question that I determined either to satisfy myself or to abandon any further attempt at intercourse with the world of spirit as vague and unsatisfying. I had not had sufficient evidence of personal identity of spirits to enable me to build on it a firm argument. No doubt I had had some, which has since had its due weight in my mind, but the mass of my communications had been of an impersonal character, with spirits who preferred to rest their claims to my attention on

the matter and tendency of their messages, rather than on the authority of any name, however great that authority might be. They had passed out of the sphere of individuality, and chafed at being recalled to it. I, on the contrary, pined for something definite, some evidence that would satisfy me that I was dealing with the spirits of my kind. The Angelic was "too high for me. I could not attain to it."

For a long time I failed in getting the evidence I wanted ; and if I had done as most investigators do I should have abandoned the quest in despair or disgust. My state of mind was too positive ; and I was forced, moreover, to take some personal pains before I obtained what I desired. Bit by bit, here a little and there a little, by steps which I do not detail here, that evidence came, and as my mind opened to receive it, some six months were spent in persistent daily efforts to bring home to me proof of the perpetuated existence of human spirits, and of their power to communicate with me and give evidence of their unimpaired individuality, and of the unbroken continuity of their existence.

Some of those who so came I had known during their life on earth, and was able not only to verify their statements, but also to note the little traits of manner, peculiarities of diction, or characteristics of mind, that I remembered in them while in the body.¹

Most of them were unknown to me, and came, always in obedience to the controlling spirit who arranged everything, to give their evidence, and go their way when the task assigned them was done. Of these some came from the most unlikely quarters, and gave me and my friends no little trouble to verify their statements.

Some came at the time of death. At that time, it would seem, the spirit finds it easy to manifest its presence, and the facts that it can give are readily capable of verification. Some

¹ Appendix II.

had been long dead, as men count time, and came back in a dazed and awkward fashion to revisit the old scenes of earth, cramped and straitened, as it were, by taking on again the old conditions.

But wherever they came from, and however they communicated, one and all bore with them an air of sincerity and earnestness, as of those who were themselves impressed with the deep significance of the work they had in hand. And all, without a lonely exception, told the truth about themselves, so far as we could verify their story. Many statements were from their nature not capable of proof; a vastly greater number were minutely accurate; and none suggested any attempt at deception. I cross-examined these invisible witnesses in every conceivable way, and with a pertinacity that left nothing untried to elicit facts. Many of my queries were unanswered, for I am afraid I asked many unreasonable questions; but I failed to shake their story, or by the most cunning *suggestio falsi* to lead them into mistakes.

I refer for evidence of this to my records, kept during all this period with scrupulous regularity day by day, minute in detail even to recording temperature and atmospheric conditions, and checked by independent records kept by another member of the circle in which these facts were communicated. Any gaps in my own narrative, such as would be caused by my being, as I frequently was, in a state of unconscious trance, are thus filled up, and my own record is checked by independent observation.

Referring to these records, I find that from New Year's Eve to January 11, 1874, during which time I was staying at Shanklin, Isle of Wight, as the guest of Dr. Speer, we had a continuous chain of testimony at our daily sittings, all bearing on the question of the identity of spirit. The evidence was given in various ways, principally through raps on the table, many of these raps produced entirely without contact of the hands of any person present. Some facts were given by

direct writing on previously-marked paper; some by automatic writing; some through clairvoyance, or clairsaudience. In a few cases corroborative evidence was drawn from all these sources.

During those twelve days eleven different cases of identity were made out by facts and dates. Three of them were entirely unconnected with any of us; and of one of them none of us had ever heard the name, or any particular. Yet his full name, his place of residence, the name of his house, and the dates of his birth and death, were given with perfect accuracy. One was connected with Dr. Speer, five with Mrs. Speer, and two were friends of my own.

Of these last, one was a near relative, whom I remembered as a child; and I, being at the time of this communication perfectly free from any abnormal influence, such as occasionally entrances me whilst these phenomena are in process, cross-questioned the alleged relative at great length. The answers were given through raps different from any we had heard before, and during a great part of the time without any contact between our hands and the table.

I inquired of her as to minute facts and dates, her birthday, the day of her death, her children's names, and a variety of details, such as occurred to me. I then asked if she remembered me as a child. She did. I proceeded to detail two imaginary incidents such as might occur in a child's life. I did it so naturally that my friends were completely deceived. It never occurred to them that I was making up a story as a test. Not so, however, my Intelligent Operator. She refused altogether to assent to the truth of my story. She stopped me by a simple remark, that she remembered nothing of the sort. Nor could I by any means get her to waver, or to admit that she might be mistaken. She repeated that she did not remember anything of the kind.

I had frequently been told that spirits would assent to anything; and my pious fraud had as much for its object to test

this allegation generally, as to prove identity in this particular case. Like most general statements, it is incorrect and inexact. Some spirits will assent to leading questions, and, possessed apparently with a desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness in themselves, will say anything. And a deal of harm is done by quoting the foolish utterances of such spirits, given, usually, in response to leading questions, which invalidate the replies made to them. I may say, once for all, that we made a point of not putting leading questions at all, and that very many cases of identity were made out by the invisible witness without our intervention in any way.

This spirit, at any rate, refused to assent to what I suggested. I certainly rose from the table convinced that I had been talking to a person who desired to tell the truth, and who was extremely careful to be exact in statement. I verified all the facts, and found them correctly given.

During this same period came three relatives of Mrs. Speer's, and gave full evidence of their identity. One of them had before manifested in another way at a public circle, showing his face and a peculiarly delicate hand, which was characteristic of him in earth-life. Another had attempted to show himself at the same time, but had failed to obtain recognition. With that strong desire which animates many spirits to get recognition, a desire that seems to grow with each failure, and to spur them on to renewed attempts, he followed me to a circle held at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory on December 20, 1872, and manifested his presence there, though none of his own friends were among the guests. No one knew him, or took any notice of his brief announcement, that he was a brother of Mrs. Speer's who had passed away thirteen years before. I was unconscious at the time, and found out the fact of his having communicated by the merest accident. I was turning over the manuscript book of records of Mrs. Gregory's séances, long after this particular day, and

my eye accidentally fell on the name George —. I read that he had announced himself as one very desirous to give his name, and obtain recognition as a relative of Mrs. Speer's, who had tried before to attract her attention. This attempt failing, as the first had done, he availed himself of the organised plan for bringing home this evidence which was being carried out at Shanklin, and there established his identity. This done, he went his way, and we have seen him no more. He had gone to America to look after a brother who went to New York twenty-eight years ago, and was never afterwards heard of.

In the *Spiritualist* of August 31, 1877,¹ reference is made to the appearance of an old lady who had just been freed from the body, and who, as she said, had been enabled, by prayer and loving sympathy, to raise her husband, long prisoned in the sphere of earth, to the higher state for which she had fitted herself. When she departed he was permitted to accompany her, and the two were reunited.

That husband manifested his presence during this same period of eleven days. Each spirit selects, apparently, a special rap, knock, or form of signal, which never varies, and which possesses as much individuality as the human voice. He came with the strangest and most uncomfortable sound, sometimes like a whizzing in the air, sometimes like a harsh grating on the table, each equally suggestive of unrest. The atmosphere that surrounded the spirit, and of which I was painfully conscious when he manifested his presence, was similarly indicative of unhappiness, and he earnestly asked for prayer. He had been a grasping man: gold had been his god; and he had lived on to find himself bound by golden fetters to the earth where his treasure had been. I have no words to describe the sensation of cold discomfort that his presence brought, nor the air of gruesome and grim misery

¹ Appendix II.

that was conveyed to us by what was told respecting him. His designation in spirit-life was WOE. The spirit who told us this was asked to put in one word what had brought him to this state. That word was given at once, with an intensity that impressed us all most powerfully: GREED. Yet he had not been what the world calls an evil-liver, nor neglectful of his duties. On the contrary, in his hard mechanical way, he had been punctual and exact in their discharge. But his spirit had been starved, and he awaited the time when the simple loving soul, who on earth had been his companion, should rejoin him, and infuse some spiritual life and vigour into his cold and cheerless existence. I think none who witnessed the painful reality of his manifestation would entertain any doubt as to his identity. I never quite understood till then the meaning of those words addressed by Christ to highly respectable men of the world, who, no doubt, were punctual and exact in business: "The publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you."

INFLUENCE OF ASSOCIATION, ESPECIALLY OF LOCALITY.

This spirit had first manifested after Dr. Speer and I had visited his grave. There was some link between him and the last resting-place of his body. I do not understand how or why, but I have come, after repeated evidence, to accept as a fact what I cannot give a reason for, that an earth-bound spirit is frequently associated with locality, with the home, the place of death, or even the grave. The presence of personal friends, especially if they possess the mysterious psychic power, or be accompanied by one who does, will frequently attract an earth-bound spirit, or even recall one who is not tied to this lower sphere.

This was the case with the man who met his death by

being crushed with a steam-roller, recorded in the *Spiritualist* of March 27, 1874.¹

This was the case when Dr. Speer and I, then on an excursion in the North of Ireland, visited an old disused burying-ground at Garrison. There were in it some curious Runic crosses, of which I wanted sketches. We remained a considerable time, and were greatly shocked at the skulls and bones that we found lying about in all directions. The result of that visit was such an uncanny noise in my bedroom, which was separated from Dr. Speer's only by a thin partition, that I know he entertains a lively remembrance of the visit to that graveyard. He describes the sounds as utterly destructive of sleep, and was much aggravated to find, on coming into my room, that I was slumbering peacefully through it all.

Another case occurred during these eleven days which testified again to the connection between the spirit and the resting-place of its body. In the course of a walk I had visited a beautiful churchyard, and had wandered through it. In the evening came a spirit, whose body lay there, an old friend of Mrs. Speer's, who communicated with much apparent joy, and gave clear and complete particulars of her identity, though (as I find from my record written on the spot) I was carefully occupying my mind by reciting some passages of Virgil while the message was being given, and though the table on which the raps came was absolutely untouched by us. This, I may here say, is a precaution that I habitually took in order to eliminate the disturbing element of my own mental action. The automatic writing, which has brought to me the greatest weight of evidence, has been, in very many cases, executed while I was occupied in reading a book, sometimes of a very abstruse character.

The last case during this period which I will notice was that

¹ Appendix III

of the spirit of a person lately departed, of whom no one present had even heard. He had been brought, for purposes of evidence, by the spirit who controlled the circle, and whose organised plan for presenting once for all evidence that should break down my unbelief I am now imperfectly recounting. He gave minute facts and dates as to his life, and went his way. We had some considerable difficulty in verifying the facts, but finally succeeded in doing so by a letter from his nearest surviving relative.

This case has been paralleled in at least twelve other instances, respecting each of which I am certain that information was given that was foreign to my own mind, or, as I am assured, to that of any person present.

The case of Abraham Florentine,¹ published in the *Spiritualist* of March 19, 1875, may be mentioned in this connection, as also that of Charlotte Buckworth,² published in the *Spiritualist* of January 21, 1876.

SPIRITS WHO HAVE COMMUNICATED FOR A LONG PERIOD.

I pass to a case in which a spirit, who first manifested her presence on September 4, 1872, has remained in permanent communication with us ever since. I note this case because we have the advantage of prolonged intercourse to aid us in forming an opinion as to the identity, and because the spirit has not only given unequivocal proof of her characteristic individuality, but has evidenced her presence in various ways. This is a remarkable case, too, as tending to prove that life, once given, is indestructible, and that the spirit which has once animated a human body, however brief its tenure, lives on with unimpaired identity.³

The spirit in question announced herself by raps, giving a

¹ Appendix III.

² Ibid.

See some striking evidence on this point in *Heaven Opened*, by F. J. T.

message in French. She said she was a sister of Dr. Speer's, and had passed away at Tours, an infant of seven months old. I had never heard her mentioned, and her brother had forgotten her existence, for she lived and died before his birth. Clair-voyants had always described a child as being in my company, and I had wondered at this, seeing that I had no trace of any such relation or friend. Here was the explanation. From the time of her first appearance she has remained attached to the family, and her clear, joyous little rap, perfectly individual in its nature, is a never-failing evidence of her presence. It never varies, and we all know it at once as surely as we should know the tone of a friend's voice. She gave particulars of herself, and also her four names in full. One was new to her brother, and he verified it only by reference to another member of the family. Names and dates and facts were alike unknown to me. I was absolutely ignorant of the fact of the existence of any such person.

This little spirit has twice manifested her presence on the photographic plate. One of these cases was attested by direct writing, and both will be found clearly detailed in the course of my researches, in the chapter on Spirit Photography, published in *Human Nature*, vol. viii., p. 395.¹

CHILD-SPIRITS COMMUNICATING.

This is by no means a solitary instance within my experience, of the appearance and communication of those who have been removed in tender infancy from the world of matter.

On the 10th of February, 1874, we were attracted by a new and peculiar triple tap on the table, and received a long and most circumstantial account of the death, age (even to the month), and full names (in two cases four, and in the other three in number) of three little ones, children of one father, who had been torn from him at one fell swoop by the Angel

¹ Appendix IV

of Death. None of us had ever heard the names, which were peculiar. They had passed away in a far distant country, India ; and when the message was given there was no apparent point of connection with us.

The statements, however, were afterwards verified in a singular manner. On the 28th of March, 1874, I met, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Watts, at the house of Mr. Cowper Temple, M.P. Our conversation was concerned chiefly with evidence of the kind that I am now summarising. I recounted various cases, and among others, the case of these three children. Mrs. Watts was much struck with the recital, which corresponded in outline to a very distressing history which she had just heard. On the Monday previous Mr. and Mrs. Watts had dined with an old friend, Mrs. Leaf, and from her had heard a distressing story of bereavement which had befallen the relative of one of Mrs. Leaf's acquaintances. A gentleman residing in India had, within a brief space of time, lost his young wife and three children. Mrs. Leaf entered fully into the melancholy details, but did not mention either names or the place of the sad occurrence. In reciting the incident of three young children communicating with me, I gave the names and the place, as they had been furnished to me in the messages. Mrs. Watts undertook to ascertain from Mrs. Leaf the particulars of the case she had mentioned. She did so on the very next day, and the names were the same.

Through the kindness of Mrs. Watts I made the acquaintance of Mrs. Leaf, and was much impressed with the perfect correspondence of every detail given to me with the facts as they occurred.

It is not a little remarkable that, on the very day on which this communication was made, Mrs. Watts, who possesses a very beautiful gift of automatic drawing, which had for some time been in abeyance, was impelled to draw three cherubs' heads, which, she was afterwards spiritually informed, were

drawn in typical allusion to this sad event. Other details, symbolic of the country in which it occurred, and of the attraction of the mother's spirit to her three little ones, were added. The drawing forms a very striking illustration of the various methods employed by spirit to reach various types of mind. Mrs. Watts—at that time, be it noted, unknown to me—had always been instructed in the language of symbolism, by poetic simile, and by artistic representation. The Voice appealed rather to Spirit and to the inner consciousness than to the outer sense and to methods of exact demonstration. I, on the contrary, had not progressed so far. I was on a material plane, seeking for truth after my own fashion, and craving hard logical demonstration. So to me came hard facts, clearly given, and nothing more. To her came the symbolic indication, the artistic delineation, the poetry of the incident. The source, however, was one. It was Spirit manifesting Truth to us according to our several needs.

OTHER EVIDENCES OF IDENTITY.

A different kind of evidence has come to me several times: namely, from recalling minute incidents long past which, by no conceivable possibility, could have been within my knowledge or recollection. I append an instance. It occurred at a time when I was much occupied with automatic writing, and came to me *apropos* of nothing. The spirit was present, I presume, and seized the opportunity of approaching her friend.

On a certain evening [Apr:' 3, 1874] I was about to put a question on what had just been written, when the hand began to draw, or rather to move aimlessly over the paper, as is frequently the case when a new spirit comes. Piece by piece a long communication of a very personal nature was written out. It must necessarily lose very much of its force from the brief abstract, which is all that I am able to print now. I was staying at a house in the country, and the communicating

spirit was known to the lady of the house, and also to me ; or rather she had known me as a boy, twenty-nine years ago. She first gave her full name, and enquired if I remembered it. I did not. She then said she was a cousin of the lady of the house where I was staying. She died on May 15th, 1873. In answer to my questions, she said that she had been married, and, further, gave her maiden name. The maiden name I dimly remembered, and recalled the place where she used to live. This produced a record of her life, including time and place of birth—a *description of the very house and the name of its occupier*—particulars of her married life, and date and place of death, with her age. Then followed a very exact statement of a very trivial episode in my boyhood, when I had gone on a visit to her house. In the course of this, minute incidents were recalled, and microscopic facts given which I knew nothing of, and which it is very hard to imagine any personating spirit getting up.

I subsequently verified, from two sources, what she said, and found every particular literally exact.

I enquired, further, whether she had any object in coming to me. Yes ; she wished a message given—"I lost much of my opportunity for progress through the gratification of bodily appetite. This cast me back. My course of progress is yet to come. I find my present life not very different from yours. I am nearly the same. I wish I could influence —, but I cannot get near her."

I asked for any other evidence, and she said no more could be given. Then, just as she was going away, "Stay ! Ask —— about D—— and the trap-door." I had no idea what this might mean, and inquired if she were comfortable in her present state. "As happy as may be in this state." I asked how she found me out. She came, I was told, hovering near her friend, and discovered that she could communicate. I asked if I could help her. The usual request for prayer was made.

I subsequently ascertained that the trap-door incident

about which I was told to ask was another of those minute details of daily life of thirty years ago, which seem to me to furnish about the best evidence of identity. The absurd incident alluded to could hardly have been known to any except the actors in it. The incident, I may say, occurred when I was about five years old. The person to whom I was referred recalled the trap-door episode with difficulty, and only after a night's thought.

One more case of extremely minute evidence given in detail through the means of raps, and corroborated by automatic writing, must be given before I close.

About this same time of which I have been speaking, the whole of one of our séances, extending nearly to two hours, was taken up by the communication of a series of facts, names, dates, and minute particulars, from a spirit who was apparently able to reply to the most searching questions. The day of his birth, particulars as to his family history, and details of his early life were given at my request. Then came a perfect autobiography, so far as salient facts were concerned, and embracing some trivial particulars, which, however, fell into their place in the most natural way. All questions were answered without the faintest hesitation, and with perfect clearness and precision. The particulars were taken down at the time, and are in all respects, where verification is possible, exact and accurate.

Even if this case stood alone in my experience, it is more difficult for me to imagine that what was so laboriously and precisely given was the product of imposture, the fraud of a deceiving spirit, or the vagary of an errant brain, than to believe, as I assuredly do, that the intelligent operator was the man himself, with memory unimpaired and individuality undestroyed by the change which we call Death. Resting, as it does, on the same basis with other facts that I have detailed, and with many that I have not, it presents one more link in the chain of evidence.

In addition to the long series of facts thus communicated by means of raps, there stands in a book which I used at this time for automatic writing a short letter written automatically by me, in a peculiar archaic handwriting, phrased in a quaint old-fashioned way, and containing a curious piece of old-fashioned spelling. It is signed with the name of the spirit in question, who was a man of mark in the days of his life on earth. I have since obtained a letter in his handwriting, an old yellow document, preserved on account of the autograph. The handwriting in my book is a fair imitation of this, the signature is exact, and the piece of old-fashioned spelling occurs exactly as it does in my book. This, it was said, was purposely done as a point of evidence.

A POSSIBLE MISCONCEPTION GUARDED AGAINST.

I refrain from adducing further evidence of this nature, though my records contain a great number of other cases similar in kind, and equally precise in detail. There is a point beyond which such evidence ceases to be cumulative, and that point I seem to myself to have reached.

I have been concerned solely with what I consider to be facts connected with an elementary principle of spirit communion. I have tried to lay the foundation of proof that man survives physical death, and is able, under certain conditions, to demonstrate his individuality, and to show the permanence of his interest in old associations of his earth-life.

I must guard myself, however, against a possible misconception. There are many spirits, as I know full well, who have passed beyond this plane, and who have, apparently, lost the power of proving their recollection of this portion of their existence. Earth and the scenes of Earth have faded from their gaze, and have been lost in the vaster prospect that has opened out to them. Grander interests absorb them, and when they revisit us it is to warn, instruct or guide us:

to discharge some portion of that great work which has been assigned them. There is order in the world of spirit, and many are engaged in that great missionary work which has for its object the progressive enlightenment of humanity; the revelation of higher views of truth as man grows able to bear them; the development among mankind of those nobler and purer conceptions of the Supreme that they have learned in the progressive life that is theirs. From such no such evidence as I am now concerned with is procurable; but they too bring their own contribution to the cycle of proof in the atmosphere of moral purity and elevation that accompanies them, in the vaster scope of their interests and in the absence of the pettinesses and trivialities with which we are so much engrossed.

Nothing has more impressed me than the breadth of charity and love, the purity and zeal for truth, which such spirits show. To commune with them is to be raised above the cares of earth, and to see with keener insight "the one thing needful": as the traveller who ascends the mountain-side looks down on the mists and fogs that wrap the valley below him.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

The facts that I have enumerated stand as integral parts of one great system. They fit into their own place, and they are correlated with a series of other facts within my own experience, and that of the vast majority of patient students of this subject—students I say, and patient students too, for I decline to admit that there is any value in the opinion of the mere wonder-hunter, who buzzes about at a few public séances, or in the dogmatic belief of the man who has an antecedent objection to look into any evidence, or to have what he is pleased to call his faith disturbed in any way; or in the captious criticism of the few who turn a careless glance

on what they regard as the puerilities of spiritualism compared with the imperial interests that engross them.

These facts, I say, viewed in their due relation by the patient student, establish, as I believe, two primary conclusions on which I desire to insist. They are these:—

1. Intelligence is perpetuated after the body is dead. Thought is not a question of the brain only. The man is the man still, albeit his body has mouldered into dust. The immortality of the human spirit is arguable from a secure basis of established fact. It is reasonable to propound the indestructibility of the human spirit from what we know. The dogmas of Divine Revelation receive a new illustration from the evidence of man's research. This first.
2. And next. The human spirit after its separation from the body loses none of its individuality. In other words, the real man survives. He will be *himself* in the next state, and will know and appreciate intercourse with his friends. He will carry on the interests of his life, only under changed conditions.

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY, AND PERSONAL RECOGNITION.

These two doctrines of personal immortality and personal recognition, integral parts of that divine revelation which we, as Christians, have accepted as the Word of God, seem to me to be receiving practical illustration and demonstration from what is occurring all round us. From articles of faith they are passing into logical deductions from experience.

The desire to live is strong in the heart of man, and the desire to live in the continual exercise of the affections which have gone far to make the sunshine of his earthly life is hardly less potent and universal. Those who in these modern days of Nihilism, when it is the fashion to be encumbered with as little faith as possible, asserted that man has no soul and no future before him, these lightly-equipped skirmishers

will tell us that a universal impulse, which somehow or other our race possesses, has been transferred to the pages of Revelation : and that man, having fabricated his God and his heaven, has amused himself with hopes of immortality that are the figments of his own brain.

We, who think otherwise, who regard this universal impulse as, in itself, a witness to the truth that underlies it ; we, who believe that the spirit is the man, and who offer some logical evidence as a ground for adhering to that ancient and venerable belief—a belief undamaged by the assaults of modern incredulity—we are not disposed to esteem lightly the testimony that is being day by day brought home to us on these points. They are to us the foundations of our religious belief so far as it respects ourselves. They do not, and they cannot, stand alone, for, once recognised, they carry in their train an entire code of personal religion.

Am I to live on after my body is dead ? Then it concerns me to know where. What answer comes to me from the land beyond ? You are the arbiter of your own destiny. You will live there as you are living now. By the acts and habits of your daily life, you are preparing for yourself the place of your future habitation. The filthy is the filthy still, as the pure in heart preserves his purity. You are working out your own salvation, or preparing for yourself misery and woe.

And what of the friends of earth, with whom my interests are so bound up that to sever them would be to tear out the heart-strings, and destroy the half of myself ? They live still, the same friends with the same interests, and the same affections. If you desire to join them, and to associate yourself with those who can lead you on, forward and upward, you must live as in their presence, under their piercing eye : you must energise to lead the life that has elevated and ennobled them : the life of self-abnegation and self-discipline, as of one who subdues the flesh to the spirit, and subordinates the temporal to the eternal.

In short, the whole fabric of religion, so far as it affects man, excluding for the moment the worship due to the Supreme, receives its sanction and stimulus from these doctrines which are becoming integral parts of the daily life of so many of us.

In days when a fading faith has relaxed its hold on human life, or, if you prefer it, when man has lost his grasp of it, when religion, as a binding power, is losing so much of its vitalising influence, and becoming less and less a factor in the formation of the national character, we are being, by the mercy of that God whose response is never wanting to the aspirations of His creatures, brought face to face with the reality of our spiritual existence.

There are many of us who are fain to cry, "Lord I believe : help Thou mine unbelief," not because of the prescription of a time-honoured creed, nor because of the faith which our fathers have handed on to us, sadly battered and shattered by many a blow from destructive criticism ; still less because of the dogmas of any ecclesiastical corporation ; but because we have seen with our eyes, and have proven by severe methods of logic, that DEAD MEN LIVE,—because we can argue from their perpetuated life to our own,—because we can believe that we too shall one day join the great company that has preceded us,—and because we have learned from some of them lessons reasonable, comprehensible, and coherent, of life and discipline, which following we may fit ourselves for the progressive life to come.

It is this that constitutes for me the moral beauty of Spiritualism. Apart from its religious aspects, viewed as a question of mere psychology, I should always regard it with deep interest, but it would possess for me none of the far-reaching significance that it now has. Its phenomena impress me with ever increasing wonder, though I am not always grateful for the bewilderment they cause me, nor thankful for the prominence assigned them, by some well-

meaning but injudicious friends who mistake the husk for the kernel. The buffoonery that passes current in the public mind for Spiritualism;—the fraud and folly that besmirch it;—the unclean things that get mixed up with it;—the vagaries of the unbalanced minds that are inevitably attracted to a new and fascinating subject;—these things I deplore, but contemplate without dismay. They are ephemeral, and will live their little life and die. Born of human ignorance, nurtured by human folly, they will yield to advancing knowledge and increased sense of responsibility, when the true moral significance of the subject is recognised among us.

And when they are dead, or when men can look through the fog that encircles them to the light beyond, it will be seen that the moral grandeur of this much-abused Spiritualism rests on the firm foundation of our knowledge of perpetuated human life, whence flow naturally those deductions respecting our own disembodied future, those rules for our own embodied life, which I have before indicated. Nay, more! These cardinal principles will be found to be the master principles of a Revelation that still approves itself Divine, though it has been so sorely misinterpreted by man, so grievously adulterated by human glosses and misconceptions.

I shall be content if, by anything that I have now said, I lead anyone to think out for himself what in his own life depends on the ascertained presence of that “Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line.”

APPENDIX I.

ON THE POWER OF SPIRITS TO GAIN ACCESS TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION.*

IN the retirement of private life, a vast number of séances are held, at which very interesting manifestations and revelations are frequently made, which never come under the notice of the public. A large number of Spiritualists and mediums see no reason why they should incur obloquy and abuse by telling spiritual truths to unwilling listeners, especially as it is more the business of those listeners to learn where they are going to after "death," than it is the business of anybody else to force them to accept such useful knowledge.

Recently we have been present at some séances at the residence of Dr. Stanhope T. Speer, Douglas House, Alexandra Road, St. John's Wood, at which some most interesting manifestations took place, through the mediumship of a gentleman in private life. He obtains both physical and mental manifestations of a high order. Raps, tiltings of the table, the carriage of small solid objects from one room or house to another, are common phenomena in connection with his mediumship. Large spirit-lights are seen through his mediumship, and the direct spirit voice is in the incipient stages of development. He also obtains direct spirit music—that is to say, one of the spirits usually plays, in the air, upon what sounds like a stringed musical instrument, when there is no musical instrument of mortal make in the room.

**Spiritualist*, December 15, 1873. ♣

Like most other mediums, this gentleman finds that uncongenial company reduces the manifestations to a minimum; they are moderately strong in ordinary circles, and of great power when none but intimate friends and no new influences are present, the spiritual harmony reacting in the usual manner upon the manifestations. So strongly is this fact recognised, that he has been advised by the communicating intelligences to refrain from all attempts to elicit phenomena, except in the circle with which he habitually sits. The wisdom of this advice is shown by the fact, repeatedly made clear, that any attempt to introduce new elements is attended by failure of the phenomena, as well as by the most serious physical consequences to himself. An unsuccessful séance will leave its mark upon him for some days. It is to be greatly regretted that under these conditions it is impossible that the results of his mediumship should be experimentally known to a great number who earnestly desire to witness them.

But the most valuable features of his mediumship are not seen in the physical manifestations, but in the higher developments of trance speaking and automatic writing. Whenever he has been entranced in our presence, the whole room has been in a state of incessant vibration, which could not only be felt, but heard; the vibrations go on steadily during the whole of the entrancement. Having never seen this phenomenon in connection with the trances of other mediums, we asked the spirits the reason of it. They replied that there was much surplus power during his entrancement, and their method of expanding the surplus caused the physical vibrations.

The communications obtained through his writing mediumship are of the greatest value. His handwriting changes with every different spirit who controls him, and these spirits, who are chiefly literary and theological men of past ages, give their names, the particulars of their earth-life,

extracts from their writings, and on inquiry and search at the British Museum Library and elsewhere, their statements are found to be true. The medium criticises and questions all the results of his own mediumship as closely as any scientific man would do. He says that he is assured that the messages come from individuals outside himself, the facts, arguments, and lines of thought being foreign to his own, and often strongly and seriously at variance with his own opinions, especially on theological matters. The true particulars the spirits have given about their earth-lives would make a small biographical dictionary; and although the facts stated he felt sure to be quite new to him, yet, he argued, "how can I be *perfectly* certain that they were not once in my mind, and afterwards forgotten?" On the 22nd May, 1873, the medium held the following conversation with the spirits, he writing the questions, and the answers coming afterwards by what Dr. Carpenter would call "unconscious cerebration governing the motions of the hand":—

THE READING OF BOOKS BY SPIRITS.

Can you read?

No, friend, I cannot, but Zachary Gray can, and R—. I am not able to materialise myself, or to command the elements.

Are either of those spirits here?

I will bring one by and by. I will send . . . R—is here.

I am told you can read. Is that so? Can you read a book?

✓ [Spirit handwriting changed.] Yes, friend, with difficulty.

Will you write for me the last line of the first book of the Æneid?

Wait.—"Omnibus errantem terris, et fluctibus ætas."

[This was right.]

Quite so. But I might have known it. Can you go to the book-case, take the last book but one on the second shelf, and read me the last paragraph of the ninety-fourth page? I have not seen it, and do not even know its name.

"I will curtly prove by a short historical narrative, that popery is a novelty, and has gradually arisen or grown up since the

primitive and pure time of Christianity, not only since the apostolic age, but even since the lamentable union of kirk and the state by Constantine."

[The book on examination proved to be a queer one called "*Roger's Antipopopriestian*, an attempt to liberate and purify Christianity from Popery, Politikirkality and Priestrule." The extract given above was accurate, but the word "narrative" substituted for "account."]

How came I to pitch upon so appropriate a sentence?

I know not, my friend. It was by coincidence. The word was changed by error. I knew it when it was done, but would not change.

How do you read? You wrote more slowly, and by fits and starts.

I wrote what I remembered, and then I went for more. It is a special effort to read, and useful only as a test. Your friend was right last night; we can read, but only when conditions are very good. We will read once again, and write and then impress you of the book: "Pope is the last great writer of that school of poetry, the poetry of the intellect, or rather of the intellect mingled with the fancy." That is truly written. Go and take the eleventh book on the same shelf. [I took a book called *Poetry, Romance and Rhetoric*.] It will open at the page for you. Take it and read, and recognise our power, and the permission which the great and good God gives us, to show you of our power over matter. To Him be glory. Amen.

[The book opened at page 145, and there was the quotation perfectly true. I had not seen the book before; certainly had no idea of its contents.]

Here, then, are very strong proofs of spirit identity, and of spirit messages very free from bias due to the thoughts of the medium. As some spirits can read books when conditions are favourable, the fact brings their personal identity again into question, for may not a deceiving spirit extract personal particulars from a book, and give them as appertaining to himself?

Seeing, then, certain spirits are, on the whole, giving very fair proofs of their identity and truthfulness through this

medium, the following communication about Dr. Dee is of considerable interest, especially as we gave a brief review of the life of Dr. Dee in a recent number of the *Spiritualist* :—

DR. DEE'S SPIRIT.

April 19th, 1873.

Can you tell me about the spirit who came last evening?

He was the same spirit who has visited you before, and has made the loud and sharp knock. He said of himself truly that his name was John Dee. He was a man of vast research and great refinement, versed in the mysteries of ancient magic and astrology, and all the occult sciences. He was also skilled in the exact sciences, being once lecturer on Euclid in the University of Paris. He was in earth-life a progressive spirit, and versed in the subject of intercourse between us and your world.

He lived in Queen Elizabeth's days, he says.

Yes. He was consulted as to the voice of the spirits on the occasion of the Coronation, and fixed the day at the instigation of his spirit guides. I do not know the year of his birth or death, but he was a friend both of your King Edward VI. and of Elizabeth. She took great interest in his marvellous collection of works on occult science, and visited him frequently at Mortlake, where he lived and died.

But he was abroad, you said.

Oh yes, much. He studied at Louvain, and at Cambridge. He had great power of application, being able to study eighteen hours a day.

April 20th, 1873.

You were telling me about John Dee.

He is here. He will give you particulars through me. He was born in London in 1527. He went at fifteen to St. John's College, Cambridge. There he studied eighteen hours a day, devoting four only to sleep. You inquire about his foreign travel. He went to the Netherlands after taking his degree, and before leaving Trinity. He studied at Louvain, and lectured at Paris. Edward VI. gave him Upton-on-Severn. He lived and died at Mortlake, with a magnificent library of books on both the exact and occult sciences.

He was born in —, he cannot remember now. In 1551 he associated with himself Edward Kelly in the pursuit of astrology, magic, and what you call Spiritualism. The Palatine of Siradia, who was in England on a visit, patronised him and took him back to Poland. Growing tired in time, he gave them over, and they were patronised by the Emperor Rodolph. Banished thence by the Pope's decree, he was hidden by the Count Rosenberg in his castle, where they carried on their occult arts, as they were called.

What do you mean by "gave him Upton-on-Severn"?

Appointed him priest of that place: though, in fact, it was not for aught but the gain that the appointment brought.

Was he then in orders?

No, friend, never.

What do you mean by his "lecturing on Euclid"?

He gave mathematical lectures, especially on Euclid's view of geometry, of which he somewhat disapproved.

Who was the Palatine of Siradia?

Albert Laski was his name, Count his title.

How has he come to me?

In earth-life he was an earnest and advanced communer with the spheres, and ever since it has been his special mission to aid those who are willing to seek into the mysteries of the spirit land. He was a great medium, and was aided by spirits greatly. Now he repays his debt. You will hear more of him. Now he bids you farewell.

One of the most conclusive instances of an intelligence existing outside of the medium was furnished by a spirit who gave the name of Zachary Gray, who stated himself to have been in earth-life a cleric, who was much concerned in religious disputation between the Church and the Puritans. He lived at Cambridge in 1725, and was Vicar of St. Peter's and St. Giles' there, and also of Houghton Conquest. He was best known in the literary world for his edition of "Ye Immortal Hudibras," as he himself said. This spirit wrote in a most peculiar handwriting, and in the old English spelling, the extracts which are appended. After much trouble they have been verified, with the exception of the last, no trace of

which could be found till the reference was supplied by the hand that wrote the extract. They come from a rare work of John Lydgate's, called "The Lyfe of our Ladye," a copy of which may be seen, under carefully prescribed restrictions, in an inner room at the British Museum. Copies of this work are extremely scarce—we know of no other—and none, we are thoroughly assured, had ever come under the notice of the medium through whom the extracts were written.

On the 24th April, 1873, Zachary Gray wrote as follows:—

Black was his wede, and his habyte also,
His heed unkeimpt, his lokis hoare and gray,
His loke downe caste in token of sorrowe and wo:
On his checks the salte teares lay,
Which bare recorde of his deadly affray.

His robe stayned was with Romaine bloode:
His sworde aye redy whet to do vengeaunce,
Lyke a tyraunt most furyouse and wode
In slaughter and murdre set at his pleasaunce.

On the 20th July, 1873, he wrote, having previously written a long extract from the "Lyfe of our Ladye,"—

Friend, we continue ye excerpe from "Ye Lyfe of our Ladye."

And dryeth up ye bytter terys wete
Of Aurora, after ye morowe graye. ✠
That she in wepyng doth on flowres flete,
In lusty Aprile, and in freshe Maye:
And . . .

(a long pause.)

Friend we can no more.—Zach: Gray.

On the 12th June, 1873, he wrote:—

Friend, I once wrote for you an excerpt from the works of John Lydgate. I have been waiting an opportunity to give you another. Here is a curious and picturesque description of Fortune in her perpetual changefulness.

"Her habyte was of many folde colours,
Watchet blewe of fayned stedfastnesse,

Her gold allayed like sun in watry showres,
Meyxt with grene for change and doublesse."

On the 20th July, 1873, the following was written :—

"In the countrey of Canterbury most plenty of fish is :
And most chase of wilde beastes about Salisbury Irvis :
At London ships most ; and wine at Winchester :
At Hartford shepe and oxe : and fruit at Worcester :
Soape about Coventry : and yron at Gloucester :
Metall, lead, and tynne in ye countrey of Exeter :
Evordwicke of fairest woode : Lincolne of fairest men :
Cambridge and Huntingdon most plenty of deepe venne :
Elie of fairest place : of fairest sight Rochester."

Friend, I have remembered it right well.

Farewell.—Zach. Gray.

In one of the above extracts two stanzas have been incorporated into one, and the intermediate portion of the original left out, which could scarcely have been the case had the medium ever seen the lines anywhere, so that they might be supposed to have come out afterwards unconsciously from his brain.

APPENDIX II.

ON SOME PHASES OF MEDIUMSHIP BEARING ON SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

THE evidence for what is broadly known as the Spiritual creed rests upon many bases, each having its own special weight, and its own adaptability to special types of mind. Phases of mediumship furnish different phases of evidence, and it is useful to collate and compare these now and then, and to see what they prove, and to what conclusions they point.

The two things, be it observed, are very different, and it is to the common practice of confounding presumptive evidence with proof that much of our weak argument is due. It is extremely difficult to *prove* anything outside of mathematics; perhaps it is impossible when we deal with the spirit, and the unseen, and the future. But, short of mathematical proof, there is moral certainty. We are morally certain of many things that we cannot prove, and that we have not subjected to personal test, or that, for one or more of various reasons, we cannot demonstrate. And on this we act throughout our lives. It is this position that I conceive to be attainable in reference to the creed of Spiritualism.

And this applies to that greatest *crux* of every intelligent Spiritualist, which is at the same time the most attractive article in his creed—the Immortality of the human spirit, especially of his own departed friends, and so, by inference, of himself. Here, again, there is some laxity in the use of

terms. We cannot *prove* Immortality—we can only establish a more or less strong presumption of perpetuated life after physical death. And this presumption some, who have time for study and opportunity (which all cannot get), and some little logic in their heads (which all have not got), may carry to the plane of moral certainty. It is well for Spiritualism, as popularly understood, that this is so; for it must be admitted that the popular interest largely centres in the selfish view; and if one could prove that human kind do not live and talk (even the nonsense that usually *is* talked) to us, most would turn aside with a shrug and say, “I want *my* dead; not all these spirits,”—just as the lonely child, left in the dark, sticks its fingers into its eyes, and cries, “I want *my* Ma!”

What light, then, has mediumship to throw upon this question? In the popular estimation, much. A great deal, however, must be ruled out on the score of enthusiasm, insufficient evidence, imperfect observation, and the like, before we get to the root of the matter. And when we do, in individual cases, get evidence that will bear investigation, we should cherish it as a specimen to be collated with other specimens and preserved for reference. It seems to me that another fallacy of constant recurrence in this subject is this. Every case of identity is submitted to jealous sifting, and most rightly. But every case is received with a stare of surprise, as if it were the first of all its race, as if no traveller had ever yet come back from the *outré-tombe*; as if this were a lonely phenomenon. Now this is a fallacy; for the weight of evidence is cumulative. The first case proves little; the next more; the third more still, especially if the observers have made independent records. So that when one sane and capable observer steps forward and says, “I have recorded a hundred cases in which those called dead have communicated to me evidence of their perpetuated identity,” and when, from another place, another says, “And I too”; and

a third, and so on to a vast number, who give their own proofs, and display their own reasons for belief; and when all this evidence is found to make for one conclusion—then the cumulative weight is so great that to ignore it is a very serious fallacy.

One great difficulty in presenting evidence of this kind to the public is, that it is impossible to publish names, facts, and dates *in extenso*, at least in many cases. The facts refer to persons still living; or the dead have living friends, whose feelings must be respected. The medium would object to vivisection and the friends to the *post-mortem* examination, which would be held by very rude enquirers. I have now and again recorded cases such as that of Abraham Florentine, and others, which the curious reader will find incorporated in SPIRIT TEACHINGS, that present strong evidence of identity; and I know many more; I have records of (I believe) at least a hundred. Many others must have similar records, if their observations have been carefully kept, and if their opportunities have been fairly large. Most mediums, I believe, who do not waste their force in the elementary phenomena which the lower class of spirits delight in producing to the exclusion of all others, can get such evidence with patience. But they must wait, and (in most cases) they must be content to take what comes. Earnest desire for the return of a particular individual usually defeats its own object, and this a young observer has to learn. "Expectant attention" (*pace* Dr. Carpenter) does *not* manufacture the desired result. But patience, careful observation, and a passive mind do, in my experience, produce their fruit.

I will record, with such precision as circumstances permit, the facts which have led me into this train of thought. An extraordinary severe strain of work left me a month ago, it is necessary to premise, with the mental powers jaded and used out, so that even to read a newspaper was irksome. Consequently I removed from the whirl of London and the excite-

ment of its busy life to the peaceful quiet of the country, and occupied myself in the busy idleness of doing nothing. That is not much in my way, and at first nothing but sheer inability to think kept me still. Soon, however, rest began to do its beneficial work, and I experienced the returning sensations of mental vigour. During all this time, and for some weeks before, the objective evidences of mediumship had been absent, save only for some remedial processes, which are usual when I am out of health. But now, as health was re-established, and the conditions of quiet and rest permitted, there supervened a condition of great lucidity. On ordinary occasions, in the press and worry of daily occupations, the spiritual faculties with me are dimmed. I see (if at all) "through a glass darkly," and have to test and try my sensations before they can be accepted. Here there was none of that: the vision was "face to face," and I found myself receiving its evidences with the same unquestionable acceptance that I do the phenomena that surround me in the natural world. I look at myself in the glass and accept the counterfeit presentment without argument. I know, of course, that *I* am not there—that the solidity is visual deception, and so on; but I accept the working model and am content. So in the cases of clairvoyant vision. The vision was so palpable that it created no revulsion, no wonder, no questioning in my mind.

The first of my cases occurred on August 18th inst. I had returned from a three days' absence to the house of friends with whom I was staying. When I left, a friend of the lady of the house was unwell. During my absence she died very suddenly. When I entered the room I saw her standing beside her friend—the lady whom I was visiting. The disembodied phantom was as clear to my gaze as the living person to whom I was talking. "So Miss —— is dead," I said, forgetting that the good lady could not see her ghostly visitant. "Yes." "And buried," I continued, for the words sounded in my ear. "Yes, but how did you know?" Then I

remembered, and turned the subject, for my hostess would have fainted in horror had she known how near to her her friend was. Strange! a few hours ago and she would sit by the bedside and clasp the clammy hand, and kiss the lips on which death already had set the seal of silence: yet she would have screamed at the friend whose self was by her, minus that old and shabby body which it had cast off. That is what "I believe in the resurrection of the body" has brought us to. I took careful note of the dress, mien, and face of the ghost—I had never seen the original in the body—and, as occasion served, I elicited from my hostess a description, which greatly tallied with my vision, except in one point. The ghost wore a brooch of peculiar make, which I could get no description of. On the following day, however, my hostess came back from her friend's house with the identical ornament in her hand. Her friend had left it to her as a memento. She looked puzzled at me—very; and I think she suspects something uncanny, for she eyes me now and again as one would study a phenomenon.

During the whole of that day I was in this state of lucidity, and could see and converse with *persons* who were as clear to my eye, and whose voices sounded as distinctly to my ear, as any that impinge on my natural organs of ~~sense~~ sense. One special visitor of that day impressed me much. He, too, was lately dead, and I made his acquaintance thus for the first time, yet his form and features are as clear in my mind as are those of the worthy clergyman who has just done me the honour to call upon me and talk conventional platitudes for half an hour. Here are facts which should concern him; yet I know full well (his face was enough!) that if I had enlightened him on the matter he would have bolted as from Old Scratch, and probably have thought it necessary to purify himself somehow.

During this same day I was conscious of the *presence*, rather than of the *form*, of a spirit that tried to make itself clear, but failed. This is a familiar fact to me, and I find

frequently that some try and never succeed, but go away, after fruitless efforts, or communicate through a medium-spirit. In this case I watched the efforts of the spirit at intervals during two days. The "atmosphere"—what shall I call the sensation of a known presence without a recognised form?—of the spirit seemed familiar, and I thought it was, but did not know who it was until I was told by a spirit-friend who gave me the name. It was that of an old lady, a connection of near friends of mine, and her husband had been a frequent visitor to our circle when we used to meet at Dr. Speer's. The figure never was very clear, as the others had been, to my eyes, but the recognition was made complete by some very touching communications made from her. She had been a loving, simple soul, who had lived out all her days, and had dropped from this material plane after a life as blameless and as innocent in its sincerity and simplicity as most of us would desire to spend. Her husband had been other in his nature, more material, more given to hoarding wealth, and to the things of this world. The union, however, between the two natures seems to have been real. And now the freed spirit found its delight in union with her earthly husband, and the two rose together beyond the atmosphere of earth in which one of them had been prisoned so long.

The communications are too sacred to quote, and the scanty details I have given are very meagre compared with the reality. In all such cases experience is necessary in order to realise the truth. It would be impossible to convince me that I was under hallucination in these cases. I should scout the notion of a personating spirit with scorn. There was in all, and especially in the last cases, an essential character of truth, too subtle to be analysed, too fleeting to be fixed in print, but which is—to one who has grasped it—the *ne plus ultra* of conviction.

The phase of clairvoyance gradually passed, as it became necessary for me to return to work which pressed. I have

had recurrent phases like it again and again, but they go when the stern work of life needs doing. We shall not get any persistent experience of this kind until the possessors of the gift are isolated, separated from contagious influences, removed from worldly cares, and treated as the ancients treated those through whom they gained their glimpses of the future. But much may be done by careful observation, when such is possible, especially by the medium himself fixing his sensations, noting every small point—none is too small to be of import—and keeping exact record of all.

Above all, it is necessary, in the present stage of our knowledge, to avoid dictating conditions in these experiments. That may sometimes be done in the investigation of the physical phenomena, but not here. The conditions are so delicate, they are so fugitive, we know so little, that observation prolonged and patient is the wise course. Anxiety, we know, will upset the conditions at once; hence, possibly, so few personal friends return to a medium. Most of those who come to me are strangers to me—persons whom I never heard of. Some are apparently brought by my own guardians to convict a stubborn scepticism of its shallowness; some are attracted by a certain sympathy, some by curiosity, some by a desire (seldom gratified) to be allowed to get at their earthly friends; some come, as though they were still in the flesh, as one might call on an acquaintance.

I will record such a case, not because it is peculiar, or because it presents any features that mark it out for special attention, but just because it is one of many—a typical case, where there was no “expectant attention,” no scope for “unconscious cerebration,” no apparent object for deception. Some six or seven years ago, when I first became acquainted with the phenomena of Spiritualism, I had a friend who was engaged in press work for one of the leading newspapers. I was full of the subject, and I thought I would discuss it with my friend. (I never had the conversion crame.) He

was unreceptive and argumentative, and I did not make any impression on him other than to impress him with a conviction of my sincerity and earnestness and an entire disbelief in the spiritual origin of my facts. One day we were walking together and rain came on. To avoid a wetting we took refuge in a billiard-room near at hand, and whiled away the rainy hour with a game, discussing all the while. The proprietor was the only other person in the room, and he showed some interest in what I was saying. He asked some questions, and seemed rather frightened than otherwise. He was a wine merchant, and gave me his card as I left, asking for custom. From time to time I did purchase some goods from him, and on perhaps half a dozen occasions exchanged some words with him. He always asked me about Spiritualism. The last time I saw him he was ill, and said that he was in the doctor's hands, but was mending fast. I saw no more of him until sitting alone, as my habit is, in my study in the early morning, he appeared to my clairvoyant eye. I was writing about transcorporeal action of spirit, the double, and such phenomena, and I wondered much at this apparition. I never thought for a moment that it was anything but a double of the living man. For a time he could not speak; but when he managed to make me hear, he saluted me as he would have done in the flesh, calling me Mr. —, a name which he heard my friend use while we were together in the billiard-room. It was a name used by him, and known, I am sure, to no one else except two or three acquaintances. Yet this spirit used it quite naturally, as he would have done in the flesh, though he knew my real name well enough. I gradually inquired what brought him, and learned that he had "come to see me." He was dead—had died some two months ago at a place and address which he gave me. He likewise told me his full name, the disease which carried him off, and the date of his death. All these facts were entirely outside of my knowledge. He died at a watering-place far

away. His full name, disease (a peculiar one), and death, were utterly unknown to me. I and some friends verified them all, and found them literally exact. Yet he seemed to have no special reason for coming, unless it was to add his stone to the cairn of evidence. He did not even say that he had discovered the truth of my faith, and had come to confirm it. He came, and he went, and, like many another who has done the same, I have seen him no more.

These are specimens of the facts that have set me moralising. What do they go to prove? What conclusion am I justified in drawing from them? Briefly, disembodied intelligence. And not that only; but, perpetuated individuality. Phenomenal facts, of which I have seen shoals, are in my mind outside of a "perhaps." I do not only *believe*—I *know* them; and any number of counterfeits (greatly as I deplore every one of them) would do nothing to shake the weight of positive evidence. They have their use, which I admit gratefully, and in their place they perform valuable work. But they will not prove my case; and they ought to be but the stepping-stones to further knowledge. They will not do for my purpose, which is to prove what is loosely called IMMORTALITY. I know *them*; but I do not know *what causes them*. I have not interviewed "the Intelligent Operator at the other end of the line." (When I so say I allude to mere cases of physical phenomena when no information or name is given: not to cases like Florentine's, where the facts were given through table movements entirely.) I do not look to such cases for the class of evidence I want. I believe it must be had on another and higher plane, and after patient and laborious search. It does not lie on the surface, and is not to be gathered up like manna fresh sent from heaven.

In my quest after this evidence I must part company with many with whom I should like to find myself in company.

1. I must leave men like Professor Huxley, and the large number of persons who say, quite sincerely, "I don't care

about all this. It does not interest me. I don't want to listen to these idle words; and I really do not care whether I live again or not." From these I must separate *in limine*. I *do* care very much about the matter. I think it is *the* problem to which the interest of all others must yield. I want to live, to go on living, working, learning, in short, energising. And I very sincerely hope that Professor Huxley *will* live again, in spite of himself, if need be. I should mourn the extinction of such "a particle of the Divine mind."

2. I must leave the man who finds himself unable to get any evidence that will satisfy him, and who is, therefore, always concerned with superficial phenomena, "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." There are some minds, I fully believe, that are not constructed to receive any such evidence as can be had on these matters. They must be left to grope, or to gain their evidence elsewhere, or not to gain it at all. I have got what I hold to be proof, such as is possible, such as I want. I will go forward.

3. Then I must leave those who indulge in mere logomachy, hair-splitting, "curious questionings" on superficial matters of no real moment. We may do that till we "fade into the infinite azure," as Tyndall puts it, or, as his irreverent parodist translates it, "till all is blue." There is no end to mere war of words. Let us get on; having made sure of the fortresses behind us, let us progress.

4. Nor can I think that those who shout theological warnings about the Devil deserve any more heed. I do not notice them. I have talked with many and many a spirit, good, bad, and indifferent; some who were what we call evil-livers; some who were what we call decent folks, to outward appearance (whited sepulchres, nevertheless); some who are happy, some who are not; but I have found no Devil yet. I have no fear of Bogie, and would leave him to frighten those whose hands first formed him. Spirits are very *human*; as a rule (which has its exceptions), they are men and women

with the frailties, and passions, and peculiarities, and characteristics of their earth-life. They are just what they made themselves, and so they remain till they make themselves something else. They are neither gods nor devils.)

5. One more class I leave, and that is those who beguile me with fantastic hypotheses, unproven and unprovable; cunning devisements of curious brains, invented for the purpose of ignoring the plain explanation of facts and substituting some fine-drawn subtlety which is worthless unless proven, and which may be left alone until it rests on a solid basis. I believe in plain explanations unless they can be disproven. The *onus* rests on those who reject them; and I have a firm belief that we are logically right in dismissing, or at least in relegating for future examination, hypotheses which rest on the airy basis of imagination. Eliphaz Levi, for instance, and a certain class of occult writers, tell us that the astral spirit will maintain individual existence for some time and then be resolved into its elements, just as the physical body will moulder and be disintegrated at last. This astral spirit, they say, can communicate for awhile after bodily death, make itself visible, and do, in effect, what we say spirits do. But it will be disintegrated soon, and you will hear no more of it. Well, this is theory. Why, we may ask, and when? I have had facts and statements, and have verified them too, from spirits who have left this earth hundreds, in some cases many hundreds, of years, and I have had similar statements and facts from spirits that have gone thousands of years. These rest on the same authority which I have found faithful after reiterated proof, and therefore, though I cannot verify the statements from the lapse of time, I am entitled to produce them as secondary evidence. This leads me to put aside such hypotheses, at any rate for the present.

Leaving these alone, then, I wish to direct attention to the facts, specimens of which I have adduced; to the

characteristics of their production ; to the cumulative nature of the evidence—only one side of which, be it remembered, is here noticed—and to the conclusions logically deducible from them. These facts, taken in their due and natural connection with other facts bearing on the subject, seem to me to demonstrate—

- ✓1. Unembodied intelligence,
- ✓2. Of a character that is human,
- ✓3. Maintaining the individuality of its earth-life.

I must not dwell on arguments further ; but I insist that the facts are very numerous ; that their force is cumulative ; and while I cheerfully make large deductions for enthusiasm, fraud, looseness in recording, and the like ; and while I also admit and believe that intelligence not human is also at work, I nevertheless hold that man does in many ascertainable instances live after his bodily death, and that in that disembodied state he preserves his characteristic individuality of mind.

I believe that this, logically, warrants me in arguing on to the general canon of personal existence beyond the grave for mankind *en masse*, though I am willing to admit exceptions (which, by the way, prove the rule).

I believe that the agencies concerned in Spiritualism are principally departed human beings, though I also believe that some or many of the lower phenomena are caused by beings who have not yet reached man's plane of intelligence, even as I hold most surely that some, who have progressed far beyond it, do return to enlighten and instruct him.

With Professor De Morgan I admit that the spiritual explanation is "ponderously difficult," but I also insist that, as the result of my own experience and reading, and after long and careful study, the weight of evidence is, to my mind, "ponderously" on its side.

APPENDIX III.

CASES OF SPIRIT-IDENTITY.

I.—MAN CRUSHED BY A STEAM-ROLLER.*

ON the evening of Saturday, February 21st, a few friends met together at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21, Green Street, Grosvenor Square, W. The party numbered six in all, and included the Baron du Potet, and the gentleman to whose mediumship we are indebted for the SPIRIT TEACHINGS which have appeared from time to time in your columns. There was no intention of having a séance, and ordinary topics were the subject of conversation, when suddenly, in the middle of dinner, this gentleman surprised us by saying he felt a spirit standing near him between himself and the Baron (who sat on his right); whether good or bad he could not tell, but the influence was by no means pleasant. The spirit was also perceived by the Baron, to whom it conveyed the impression that it was in a state of great distress, and that it was the spirit of a person who was then alive. Nothing more was said at the time, but the medium continued to feel a disagreeable influence near him, and spoke of it to me when dinner was over.

As soon as we reached the drawing-room, he was impelled to sit down and write; and when a pencil and paper had been brought, his hand was moved backwards and forwards with great rapidity, and an object was roughly drawn on the paper which resembled a horse fastened to a kind of cart or

* *Spiritualist*, March 27th, 1874. (Contributed by an eye-witness of the séance.)

truck. Several attempts were made to depict it more clearly, and then the following sentences were written:—"I killed myself—I killed myself to-day—Baker Street—medium passed." Here the writing became unintelligible, as the medium grew more and more agitated, until at length he rose from his seat in a state of trance, and exclaimed in broken sentences—"Yes! yes! Killed myself to-day, under a steam-roller. Yes! yes! Killed myself—blood, blood, blood!" The control then ceased, but the medium felt the same unpleasant influence for some hours afterwards, and could not entirely shake it off for several days.

In reference to the communication, I may state that, although the medium had passed through Baker Street in the afternoon, neither he nor any one else present was aware that a man had committed suicide there in the morning by throwing himself under a steam-roller. A brief notice of the occurrence appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the evening, but none of the party had seen that paper. It is worth remarking that on the front of the steam-roller which was used in Baker Street a horse is represented in brass, and this, perhaps, may serve to account for its appearance in the medium's drawing, where we should certainly not expect to find it.

Allow me, in conclusion, to point out a few of the inferences which may fairly be drawn from the facts I have stated by those who are willing to accept them as true. In the first place, they would seem to prove that no amount of injury done to the body at the time of death incapacitates the spirit for immediate action. In this case the unfortunate man was literally crushed to pieces, and yet a few hours afterwards his spirit could communicate in writing through the medium, and could also make use of his organs of speech. In the next place, it would appear that a spirit just released from the body carries with it something corporeal; otherwise it is difficult to account for the Baron's impression that the spirit he perceived was that of a person who was then living.

Again, we may infer that spirits immediately after death are able to recognise a medium through whom they can communicate.

In the case before us, it would appear that the spirit followed the medium from Baker Street, and waited for an opportunity of making his presence known. And, lastly, I would add the remark, that the man who accepts the facts I have stated, and seeks for a solution of the difficulties that surround them, will look in vain for much assistance from psychic force or unconscious cerebration.

2.—CASE OF ABRAHAM FLORENTINE.*

SIR,—In the *Spiritualist* of December 11th, 1874, you printed a letter from me, a letter the main portion of which, in view of the information elicited by it, I will ask you to reproduce:—

In the month of August last, I was staying with Dr. Speer at Shanklin, Isle of Wight. We had a number of sittings, and at one of them a spirit communicated, who gave his name as Abraham Florentine. He said that he had been concerned in the war of 1812, and that he had lately entered spirit-life at Brooklyn, U.S.A., on August 5th, at the age of eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days. We had some difficulty at first in making out whether the month and days referred to the age or to the length of his illness, but he returned on the following evening and cleared up the difficulty.

The manner in which the communication was made was most singular. We were seated, three in number, round a heavy loo-table, which two persons would move with difficulty. Instead of raps, to which we are accustomed, the table commenced to tilt. So eager was the communicating spirit, that the table rose some seconds before the required letter was arrived at. In order to

**Spiritualist*, March 19, 1875.

mark T, it would rise, quivering with excitement, in a manner perfectly indescribable, about K, and then descend at T with a thump that shook the floor. This was repeated until the whole message was complete; but so eager was the spirit, and so impetuous in his replies, that he bewildered Dr. and Mrs. Speer completely (I was in deep trance), and caused the process to be prolonged over the whole sitting. If I may venture on a guess, I should say that Abraham Florentine was a good soldier, a fighting man not nice to meet, and that he retains enough of his old impetuosity to rejoice at his liberation from the body, which (if I may guess again) had become a burden to him through the painful illness.

Will the American papers copy, and enable me to verify my facts and guesses ?

M. A. (OXON.)

Mr. Epes Sargent, to whom I privately communicated the facts of the case, was kind enough to insert for me a paragraph in the *Banner of Light* of December 12th, 1874, embodying the same inquiry. The result was to elicit what the *Banner* calls "one of the most singular and well-attested evidences of spirit return which it has been our good fortune to chronicle during a long experience." The matter may best be stated in the words used by the writer in the *Banner of Light* of February 13th, 1875. It will be observed that a misconception as to the meaning of the words "a month and seventeen days" occurs at first, but this is subsequently, cleared up, though, according to the widow's account, the age should have been 83 years, 1 month, 27 days. This, however, does not affect the case of identity.

The original inquiry in the *Banner* was this, and the result is quoted direct from that newspaper :—

"At a séance in England lately, a spirit communication was received by means of the tilting of a heavy table. The whole table seemed alive, and as though it were being disintegrated in the very fibres of the wood. The gist of

the communication was that the spirit was one Abraham Florentine, who died at Brooklyn, N.Y., August 5th, 1874. He said he was in the war of 1812, and then, after an interval, added, 'a month and seventeen days.' Can any of our Brooklyn friends inform us whether they ever heard of Abraham Florentine?"

"No sooner had that issue of our paper found its way to the public, than we received by due course of mail the following reply, which speaks for itself—

"To the Editor of the 'Banner of Light.'

"In the *Banner* to-day received here, is a paragraph concerning a spirit who manifested through the medium of a dining-table at some place in England, and gave the name of Abraham Florentine, a soldier in the war of 1812. You make enquiry whether anyone ever heard of Abraham Florentine. I cannot specifically answer that question, but having been engaged some fourteen years since in auditing the claims of the soldiers of 1812 in the state of New York, I am yet in possession of the records of all such who made claims for service in that war. In those records appears the name of Abraham Florentine, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and a full record of his service can be obtained in the office of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York, in claim No. 11,518, war of 1812. I think, however, that he there claimed for a longer term of service than that he gave in England, his allowance being for 58 dollars.

WILSON MILLAR, *Claim Agent.*

WASHINGTON, D.C., *December 13th, 1874.*

"Pursuant to the advice of our legal correspondent, we addressed a letter to the Adjutant-General, S.N.Y., asking for the facts, without, however, giving any reason for our request, and received the following courteous reply:—

"General Headquarters, State of New York,
Adjutant-General's Office, Albany, *Jan. 25th, 1875.*

'SIRS,—In reply to your communication, dated Jan. 22nd, I have to furnish you the following information from the records of this office:—Abraham Florentine, private in Captain Nicole's

Company, 1st Regiment New York Militia, Col. Dodge, volunteered at New York on or about the 2nd of September, 1814, served three months, and was honourably discharged. He received Land Warrant No. 63,365, for forty acres. The above is taken from the soldier's sworn statement, and not from official records.—Very respectfully.

‘FRANKLIN TOWNSEND, *Adj.-Gen.*

‘Colby and Rich,
No. 9, Montgomery Place, Boston.’

“Those who are acquainted, through experience as investigators, with the workings of the spiritualistic circle, will bear in mind that the correct giving of dates is ever a matter of difficulty on the part of the returning intelligence, and, therefore, the slight discrepancy existing between the length of service given by the spirit Florentine and that embodied in the record is easily explainable.* But the main facts are established. Here is a spirit who manifests under the most peculiar circumstances, and in the most forcible manner, to a circle in a foreign land, whose members are all strangers to the fact that such a being as himself ever trod the planet; a member of that circle asks through an English paper that proof (if any exists in America) may be given him as to the verity of said spirit's assertions, and the same inquiry reaches us by private letter; we then call upon the public for information concerning one of whom we have never before heard; we receive in reply—from a legal gentleman in Washington, whose acquaintanceship we have never had the pleasure of making—the information which leads us to address the Adjutant-General of the State of New York (who is also a total stranger to us), and are assured from data existing at his office that such a soldier did serve in the war of 1812, as claimed. The theory of collusion is untenable here, as the several parties who have given in the testimony are strangers

* This is a misconception. The one month seventeen days, refers to age, not to length of service.

to each other. The chain of evidence is complete. Let those who think they can explain this occurrence on any other hypothesis than that maintained by the spiritual philosophy make the attempt."

When that statement appeared, my friend, Dr. Crowell, was kind enough to take steps to obtain additional verification from Florentine's widow. I append his letter, published in the *Banner*, February 20th, 1875:—

To the Editor of the "Banner of Light."

SIR,—Upon reading in the *Banner* of the 13th inst. the article headed "Abraham Florentine—Verification of his Message," I examined my Brooklyn Directory, and there found the name of Abraham Florentine, with the address 119, Kosciusko Street. Being at the moment disengaged and interested in pursuing the subject, I at once sought the street and number indicated, and my application at the door was met by an elderly lady, of whom I enquired whether Mr. Abraham Florentine resided there. The reply was "He did reside here, but is now dead."

Ques. May I enquire whether you are Mrs. Florentine, his widow?

Ans. I am.

Upon my here remarking that I would be pleased to obtain some information about her late husband, she invited me to a seat in the parlour, and our conversation was then resumed.

Q. May I ask when he died?

A. Last August.

Q. At what time in that month?

A. On the fifth.

Q. What was his age at time of decease?

A. Eighty-three.

Q. Had he passed his eighty-third year?

A. Yes; his eighty-third birthday was on the previous eighth of June.

Q. Was he engaged in any war?

A. Yes; in the war of 1812.

Q. Was he naturally active and self-reliant, or the reverse?

A. He had a will of his own, and was rather impetuous.

Q. Was his last illness of long or short duration, and did he suffer much ?

A. He was confined to his bed for a year or more, and suffered a good deal.

I have here given the questions and answers in their relative order, and in their exact words, from notes taken at the time. During a slight pause following the last answer, Mrs. Florentine, who appeared to be a very respectable lady of about sixty-five years of age and of American birth, inquired my object in asking these questions, when I read to her the article in the *Banner*, which evidently puzzled though it interested her, and I then entered into a full explanation of its purport, greatly to her surprise. She then fully endorsed every line of it, and I left, thanking her, and promising, at her request, to send her a copy of the last number of your journal.

It will be observed that while the spirit of Mr. Florentine states his age to have been eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days, according to his widow's account it should be twenty-seven days ; but this discrepancy is hardly worthy of notice, as either he or she may here be equally mistaken.

As the case stood, before this additional confirmation of its truth was obtained, it certainly was a remarkable verification of a spirit message, but as now presented it appears to me the evidence is conclusive.

I would add that I have some acquaintance with "M.A. (Oxon.)," the gentleman in London who applied in the *Spiritualist* for information of Abraham Florentine, and I can assure your readers that he occupies a very high literary position, and his character is a guarantee against collusion and deception, and I take pleasure in contributing to establish the identity of the communicating spirit.—Yours truly,

EUGENE CROWELL, M.D.

BROOKLYN, N.Y., February 15th, 1875.

To me personally it is extremely interesting to find my queries verified by facts. I never doubted that the case would turn out, as so many others have done, to be true ; but the interesting point of observation to me was as to the

correctness of the deductions I drew from the singular way in which the communication was made. The vehemence of the tilts and knocks, the (to us) entirely novel mode of communicating, and the evident earnestness of the spirit, and its eagerness in trying to "have its say," were very striking. Doubtless, what will strike your readers more, is the singularly conclusive nature of the evidence respecting the actual return of the departed. Most undoubtedly none of us had ever heard of Abraham Florentine, nor had we any of us friends in America who could have given us news of what went on there, nor, if we had, could they have mentioned to us a fact in which we should have felt no interest. As a plain matter of truth, I repeat that both name and facts were entirely unknown to any of us. And this is one among many instances in my own experiences which I hope to gather up and record in its place.

March 10th, 1875.

M.A. (OXON.).

3.—CHARLOTTE BUCKWORTH.*

A spirit communicated by means of raps, giving particulars as to her life, which were precise, and entirely unknown to any member of the circle.

On the day following, I enquired respecting her, and an account was given, to the effect that her name, Charlotte Buckworth, was rightly given; that she had no special connection with me or with my friends, but spoke as one who was present. The fact that I had been on the previous day in company with four persons, all more or less mediumistic, had prevented regular communications, and had introduced a disturbing element.

It was said that Charlotte Buckworth, the spirit in question, had been suddenly deprived of bodily existence in 1773, at a party of pleasure, at a friend's house in Jermyn Street.

* *Spirit Teachings*, "Spiritualist," March 25, 1874.

Further inquiry elicited the information that she had suffered from a weak heart, and dropped down dead while dancing. My friend who was writing could not say at whose house, but subsequently returned to give me the information—Dr. Baker's—on December 5.

We were not able to verify this information, and had given no further thought to the matter. Some considerable time after, however, Dr. Speer had a friend at his house, who was very fond of rummaging among old books. We three were talking one evening in a room in which there were a number of books rarely used, arranged in shelves from floor to ceiling.

Mr. A. (as I will call him) mounted a chair to get at the topmost shelf, which was filled with volumes of the Annual Register. He took one down amid a cloud of dust, and commented on the publication as a valuable record of events. Almost anything, he said, could be found in it. As he said this the idea flashed into my mind at once most vividly that there was the place to look for a record of Charlotte Buckworth's death. The event would probably create interest, and so would be found in the obituary which each volume contains.

The impression was so strong—it seemed as though a voice spoke to my inner sense—that I hunted out the volume for 1773, and there I found among the notable deaths, a record of this occurrence, which had made a sensation, as occurring at an entertainment at a fashionable house, and with awful suddenness. The facts were exactly given.

The book was thickly covered with dust, and had evidently not been disturbed since it had been consigned to the shelf. I remembered that the books had been arranged five years before; there they had lain ever since; and but for Mr. A.'s antiquarian tastes, no one would have meddled with them.

The verification was, I believe, as distinctly spiritual in its suggestion as was the communication.

APPENDIX IV.

EVIDENCE FROM SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.*

THE photograph under notice was taken by Hudson during the time that he lived in Palmer Terrace, Holloway. The little child in the centre of the picture is a baby sister of Dr. Speer, the sitter on the left, in the foreground; and the shadowy form in the right front is the mother of the infant. I have related before how this child-spirit has persistently manifested at our circle almost from its first formation, coming with a French message first of all to suggest her identity. She passed from this sphere of life more than fifty years ago at Tours, being then only seven months old. Her little joyous message, "*Je suis heureuse, très heureuse*," was the first indication we had of her presence, and that the little child, so constantly described by clairvoyants as standing near me, was this little spirit, who, by a round-about means, was trying to get at her brother. Since then she has never left us, and her joyous tap is rarely unheard at our séances. ✓ She lives in the house as much as one of the children of the family; and is as well known to me, is just as real as they are. I see her, and hear her voice by the inner senses; I have felt her touch, and twice have had her portrait on the photographic plate.

This particular group was taken under strict test conditions. Dr. Speer and I followed the plate throughout, and no precaution which I have before detailed was neglected. We never lost sight of the plate from the very first, and can give unhesitating testimony that no suspicious element presented itself.

* Extracted from "Researches in Spiritualism," by M.A. (Oxon.)—*Human Nature*.

The day following that on which the photograph was taken was Sunday, and I had joined the family dinner-party. When dinner was nearly finished I became partially entranced, and loud knocks were heard on the dining-table. The alphabet was called, and Dr. Speer was requested to go to the room in which we usually meet and he would find a message for him. He went, but could not at once find anything. He was directed by the same means to look again, and he eventually discovered under a whatnot, lying so that the direct rays of light did not fall upon it, a piece of paper, on which was some curious-looking hieroglyphic. We could make nothing of it for some time, until it occurred to us to hold it up to the mirror. We then found that it was a message, written from right to left, and from the bottom of the paper to the top. The same rude cross which then accompanied every message, and which even now is frequently used, is on the paper, and the message, at first sight, looks unintelligible. Deciphered in the way I described, it runs thus: "I am Spirit of Love. I cannot communicate, but am near. The photograph was of little Pauline." Pauline was one of the names of the child; her full name (by the way, *unknown to any of us*) was correctly spelled out in answer to our request—Catharine Pauline Stanhope Speer—together with date of birth and death. Another clear case of unconscious cerebration for Dr. Carpenter!

This writing, so obtained, in a room where nobody was, into which nobody would go, and under circumstances where to play a trick (if it were in anyone's mind to do such a thing) was impossible, gave us the clue to the identity of the spirit. I say trick was impossible; for there was no one in the house who could have executed such an abstruse hieroglyphic, no one who would have dreamed of doing so; no one, except our immediate selves, who knew the child's name—Pauline. The same agency that was at work to produce the picture also authenticated it to us.

On a minute inspection of the picture we were struck by two special points. The little figure is so perfect that a powerful glass reveals the details of feature most distinctly, and, amongst others, the large eyebrows which are a characteristic of the whole family. A stranger might not at once notice what is apparent to all who know them. Again, the constant habit of those who return from the land beyond is to identify themselves by the reproduction of some peculiarity either of dress or demeanour. In another picture it is a black cap. Here it is a large, loose glove, which appears on the hand of the mother, the kneeling figure nearest to the child. It was her habit to go about the house arranging and tidying in housewifely manner, *with a loose glove on the hand*. She was notably careful about the whiteness of her hands, and took that means of preserving it.

Before I have finished this chapter I shall have other instances to adduce of this habit of identification by the reproduction of some known peculiarity. For the present I have more to say about the little child.

We went about a month ago to try for a photograph with Mr. Parkes (of whom more hereafter), and she appears again. I sat at a little table, and was almost immediately entranced. In my clairvoyant state I saw the child standing or hovering by me close to my left shoulder. She seemed to be standing near the table; and I tried in vain to call Dr. Speer's attention to her. As soon as the exposure was over, and I awoke, I stated what I had seen, and on the plate being developed, there stands apparently on the table a little child's figure. The position is exactly where I saw and felt it. And the figure, which also bears traces of family likeness, was immediately claimed by the little spirit as her picture; unbounded joy being expressed at the success of the experiment. So clear was my vision, so sure was I of what would be found on the plate, that I would have staked all my possessions on the result before I saw it.

APPENDIX V.

ON SOME DIFFICULTIES OF INQUIRERS INTO SPIRITUALISM.*

IN dealing with an inquirer's difficulties, I must draw upon other sources of information than my own personal experience. For myself, although I have met many a difficulty since, I had at first no considerable trouble in making myself acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism. It is in the explanation of facts that the perplexing problems come in. As to the phenomena themselves, though many persons do seem to find it very difficult to obtain the evidence of their own senses, and still more to believe that evidence when they have got it, I found myself in risk of being bewildered only by the superabundance of phenomena which challenged my attention.

MY INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUALISM

was in this wise. In the early part of the year 1872, some friends, with whom I was then staying, showed me Lord Adare's book of records of séances with D. D. Home. I tried to read it, but it seemed to me the dreariest twaddle I had ever come across. With many a pish and pshaw I got through half of it, and then tossed it aside. About six weeks after, my friend put into my hand one of Dale Owen's books, with a request that I would read it, and investigate the matters with which it dealt. It was with much reluctance that I agreed to meddle with the question again. It did not interest me,

* An address delivered at a meeting of the Association of Spiritualists, 38, Great Russell Street, London.

and I was busy with other things. In spite, however, of this *passive* want of interest (*active* or dogmatic opposition had no place in my mind), I found myself greatly impressed with Mr. Owen's statements and arguments. From whatever cause, whether internal spiritual preparation or intellectual conviction, I found myself impelled with irresistible power to use every means of inquiring into the alleged phenomena which were so startling to my mind.

I procured every book that I could lay my hands on and devoured them all with avidity. I inquired where I could see for myself these new phenomena, and was informed that Miss Lottie Fowler was about to hold a séance that very evening (April 2, 1872) at 15, Southampton Row. I went, and was greatly astonished at what I saw and heard. I need not take up time by detailing the occurrences of the first part of the sitting: most Spiritualists are familiar with the usual routine of Miss Fowler's séances. Much hazy nonsense was talked, and many vague statements made, which seemed to me to be of no use whatever as tests of spirit identity. I was rapidly becoming nauseated. I craved for something more clear, something on which I could rest as a stable piece of evidence. I inquired, therefore, whether I might endeavour to obtain some such proof for myself. Leave was at once given by the director of the circle, and I addressed the spirit who controlled the medium.

"You're tiring your medium, and making fun of us. Go and send someone who is serious."

The medium shivered, and turned away, and the voice came as though troubled. "You've nothing to do with me. I won't go. Me *no* go."

"Yes, you will. You'll go, and send someone else."

After more colloquy the medium again shivered, seemed to be in pain, and stood rooted to the spot, crouching as if in dread.

After a time the voice came again, but utterly changed;

the voice, this time, of a man, very calm and unimpassioned, instead of the child-voice speaking baby-jargon.

"You want me?"

"Yes. What is your name?"

"I'd rather not tell you. You can ask me any questions."

"No. Tell me what you see, or describe any one whom you see near me. I will answer yes or no; no more."

"I see a man, very old, tall, with a long white beard, and long hair."

"Yes."

"The beard is very white indeed."

"No. Go on."

"He has a very high broad forehead, and his eyes are drawn down. Why, he's blind!"

"Yes."

"And his face is black and blue. And (here the medium shuddered violently), oh! what's that in his mouth? It's like slime . . . and mud . . . and . . . oh! blood."

"Yes."

"And . . . It's dark. I can't see."

"Go on. How is he dressed?"

"He has on a long blue coat. No, not exactly a coat, . . . something long. I can't see his feet."

"Where does he stand?"

"Right opposite; close by you."

"Can you see his name?"

"No. He seems in trouble. I think it's money. He looks so horrible. Let me go! Why do you keep me here?"

"Go then. Do you know me?"

"No." (This very emphatically.)

I shall not attempt to describe the scene during the time that this conversation was being held. I have quoted from a full and careful record written at the time, and the whole scene is photographed indelibly on my mind. Everyone

seemed petrified and astonished. They would have been still more so, had they known with what photographic accuracy a scene in my own private experience was being re-enacted before my eyes. It was, I am sure, unknown absolutely to any person in the room, as unknown as I was myself. It was a scene that passed in a very distant part of Great Britain, and it was reproduced with a realistic power that bore down before it, as with torrent-force, all doubt and hesitation. I felt that the man was there before me; himself reproducing the story of his death for my conviction.

HOW I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST.

That experience made me a *Spiritualist*: it gave me a *faith*—I will say a *knowledge*—which no amount of after-experience has served to shake. From that time to this I have never wavered, though I have seen much to perplex me, much that greatly offends good taste. Though I have heard of deception, and though I believe that fraud exists; though I see reason to question the all-round conclusions of some Spiritualists, and to assign a wider area to the realm of cause than they are disposed to concede; though I meet problems day by day which I cannot solve, and difficulties which only advanced knowledge and experience can fully grasp: in spite of all this, the conclusions of that night, supported and confirmed by many an after-experience, remain firm and unshaken.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

I might detain you at length, which would be tedious, by dwelling on the steps by which further evidence was brought home to my mind. I went to the public séances held by Herne and Williams, and found no difficulty in obtaining phenomena for observation. They occurred in abundance;

but I wanted more time and facility for looking into them. The conditions of the public circle irritated me, and I determined to try for some private séances with Herne and Williams, myself and one friend being the only observers. The first of these, held May 29, 1872, was a total failure, and we adjourned to June 5, when Herne did not enter an appearance. A third appointment, for the 8th, was made as a last resource, for my mind was being gradually prejudiced by this shilly-shallying, and I was getting disgusted. We sat for more than half an hour with no result, and I proposed to withdraw. I had read (for during the interval I had got every book on Spiritualism on which I could lay my hands) that some persons stopped manifestations, and I believed it possible that I might be such an offender. I retired, and phenomena occurred at once. I returned, and they ceased. This occurred thrice; and communications were at length obtained through the alphabet. They soon ceased, however, and Herne and Williams commenced to jerk, and quiver, and twitch, and wriggle about, in the true mediumistic fashion. To my great horror, I found these jerks communicated to myself. My right arm was seized about the middle of the fore-arm, and dashed violently up and down with a noise resembling that of a number of paviers at work. It was the most tremendous exhibition of "unconscious muscular action" I ever saw. In vain I tried to stop it. I distinctly felt the grasp of the hand, soft and firm, round my arm, and though perfectly possessed of my senses and volition, I was powerless to interfere, although my hand was disabled for some days by the bruising it then got. The object we soon found was to get up the force, for Herne was levitated on to the table, and his chair was placed so as to rest on the table from the mantelshelf near which he had been sitting. Other phenomena took place, and especially striking was one that occurred just as we were going away. Williams preceded me downstairs, then came my friend, Dr.

Speer, and Herne was last. I turned on the stairs to say something to him, and I saw in clear light a chair sailing along nearly three feet from the floor, and coming towards us. It fell on the landing close to our feet. It is needless to say that this movement in mid-air of a weighty article—it was a very substantial chair—caused us to examine it carefully, and to return to the empty room which we had just left. No suspicious wire or mechanism was there, nor could any device that I can imagine have produced what I saw without instant detection. No more complete proof of the existence of an independent force can be conceived.

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE.

I had thus obtained strong evidence of the existence of the force, of its being governed by intelligence, and of the fact that that intelligence was, in one case, that of a departed friend.

I pass over a great amount of other confirmatory evidence, and hasten to tell in a few words another occurrence that greatly deepened the impression already made on my mind. My friends were going to the seaside for a summer holiday, and I was to join them after a short interval. Meantime, I went to visit an old friend whose health was failing, and who had written to beg me to go and see him at once, as he felt his time was growing short. I hurried to comply, but arrived only to be told that he had passed away a short time previously, regretting that I had not come in time to see him. I remained in the house, and when in due time I went into the room where the body of my friend lay, the spirit-form stepped forward to greet me as he would have done in life, with a smile and out-stretched hand. I saw him with clairvoyant sense as really as my natural eye discerned the objects that surrounded me; and that not once only, but on repeated occasions.

This, I need not say, deepened my faith, and strengthened its foundations. Many a stone has since been laid on that foundation, and the superstructure has reached a goodly height, but it is none too high or heavy for that on which it rests.

PRIVATE EXPERIMENTS.

I pass on to notice very briefly that I rejoined my friend and our experiments were resumed in the family circle. One by one all the most usual phenomena were produced, and many a new marvel was added. Though I have had extraordinary opportunities of witnessing the phenomena of Spiritualism during the past six years, I have seen nothing equal to the variety of the manifestations, and to the spontaneity with which they were produced. They occurred at all times, and in all sorts of places, in the house and out of it, with no formal séance; at meals, in church, in empty rooms, here, there, and everywhere, until none of us could, as sane and capable observers, entertain any doubt of the independent nature of the intelligence, any more than, as ourselves truthful and earnest inquirers into the source of the intelligence, we saw any cause to doubt its unequivocal affirmation, solemnly and repeatedly made, that it proceeded from spirits pure and good, some of whom, at any rate, were departed friends of our own, and all of whom had once been denizens of this earth.

VARIOUS INQUIRERS AND THEIR DIFFICULTIES.

Such is my own record; and in dwelling upon it I feel that I have taken some liberty with my subject, for it is not a record of difficulties. But though I have no troubles of my own to narrate, I have a large acquaintance on paper with the troubles of other people. The past five years have been

filled with a correspondence large enough to tax the energy of one man without any other occupation; and this has related mainly to the doubts and difficulties, theories and opinions, and especially to the multifarious *desideranda* of inquirers.

PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC.

1. One class of correspondents, whom I may call the scientific or pseudo-scientific, take much trouble to explain to me, some with great courtesy, others with great pity, some with patience, and a few with asperity, that I am a fool—they don't say so, but they mean it none the less—for believing in or troubling myself about these matters. Mediums they regard as vulgar rogues, doubtless on the *ex uno disce omnes* principle; investigators as shallow fools, presumably because they do not employ the scientific method made notorious in a recent celebrated instance. I get the full benefit of discourses on the laws of nature (all of which are apparently well known to my correspondents): on snapping tendons, cracking toe-joints, expectant attention, unconscious Carpenterianisms, *et id genus omne*.

This is, perhaps, the weariest and dreariest reading of all; but it serves to show that the dominant ideas fostered by this "science, falsely so called," are one great hindrance to the fair and free investigation of Spiritualism.

THEORISTS.

2. A second class are those who have an idea, a plan, a theory—the Trochus of whom the War Office, and many other departments, could tell a tale. I do not mean those who have mastered facts, and who earn the thanks of all by devoting themselves to the task of suggesting explanations of them. These merit the enduring gratitude of all lovers of truth. I refer to those who regard fact as a subsidiary

matter altogether, and whose eyes are filled with the fair proportions of their own idea. Suggest to them that they are not quite acquainted with the facts, which do not, indeed, accord with their theory, and they wave them aside with much dignified complacence, explaining that if their ideas are properly estimated they must be found to be true, and so that, since Nature works according to law, the facts will, in the end, be found to fit into their place. One correspondent expounds to me this delightful piece of argument in connection with his idea that simultaneous hallucination accounts for all.

These correspondents lead me to believe that another cause why success does not attend the investigations of some persons, is because their minds are hopelessly darkened, to the exclusion of all light, by the blind of a false theory.

THE IGNORANT.

3. A third class is the purely ignorant. These usually profess themselves to be so; they will even parade what is already sufficiently obvious, as though it were, like the beggar's rags and professional shiver, an excuse for appealing to the public pity. Starting from this platform, these persons will propound the most astonishing queries as to things heavenly and spiritual. They will ask questions which (I presume) an arch-angel would be unable to answer, simply because that exalted being would find in the questioner no antecedent knowledge which would make a reply intelligible. They will ask about God and creation, and the nature of the occupations of eternity, demanding with much *naïveté* a biography of all the heavenly host, and a topographical plan of the spheres. They will propound simple questions about predestination, and the nature of evil, and the incarnation, and other theological problems, which they seem to suppose become all completely clear to the spirit that has been, if only for a few poor years, emancipated from the physical body.

These impress me with a belief that another cause of failure in some inquirers is, that they have not prepared themselves, by gathering antecedent knowledge and clearing away old fallacies, to receive new truth. The ground has not been ploughed up, harrowed, and cleansed of weeds, so that new seed may have a chance to grow.

THE CAPTIOUS CRITICS.

4. Closely allied in ignorance are those whom I may call the captious; those who "want to know" why such and such conditions are necessary; why such and such things can't be done in such and such a way; why phenomena can't be got at the Royal Institution; why there should be any such thing as a medium or a circle; why not abolish them, and let every man be his own medium; in short, why everything is as it is, and why everything isn't as it isn't. These persons, one would declare, know how everything ought to be, and could amend God's universe to an improved pattern, and run it on entirely new principles. They may be recommended to begin their improvements by making a clean sweep of Professor Tyndall's "conditions" in his laboratory at the Royal Institution; and when they have abolished the developing room of the photographer we will begin to talk with them.

These lead to the belief that there are some, I fear I ought to say many, persons, who carry in their own minds a captious spirit—intolerant, arrogant, and dogmatic—which is a sure barrier to the reception of truth. They have not merely not swept and garnished the chamber, but they have barricaded all points of access with *chevaux de frise* of foolish objections, and strewed the floor with torpedoes into the bargain.

It was Mr. Spurgeon who, in describing a captious questioner, declared of him that if the constellation Orion were pointed out to his view, he would immediately suggest

that the shape of it was poor, and that the stars might be rearranged on a new principle.

Such captious critics are not all outside of Spiritualism.

INQUIRERS.

5. Lastly, there is the large body of Spiritualists whose questions are extremely suggestive.

Some—most of them—are engaged in a search after their departed friends. If anyone wants to know how deeply the affections enter into the motives which interest men in this subject, he need only talk to any one who has had opportunities like my own of seeing into the minds of those who are interesting themselves in spiritualism. Many who have neglected the subject before find it attractive when there is hope of reunion with one who has been reft from them. Many who have had desultory interest in it on scientific principles, or out of mere curiosity, find a deeper and keener inducement when death has invaded their homes. And many, I fear, finding that all is not so plain as they had hoped; that there are laws beyond the grave, even as here; and that these preclude or delay the coveted intercourse—many go back, and impatiently say that Spiritualism is a mockery, an affair of sub-human spirits, a dealing with devils.

This is, after all, but a refined form of selfishness, and suggests to us another antecedent difficulty in the inquirers' way, *viz.*, that a too eager desire for one thing, and a too positive state of the mind, are well-nigh sure to produce failure. The mind must be at peace, in harmonious balance, and not biassed or excited. The best attitude is one of simple receptivity; an attitude, let me say, quite compatible with the keenest scrutiny, and the most accurate observation.

Again, the letters of enthusiastic Spiritualists betray a singular inability to understand the laws of evidence. There are many grounds on which conviction comes to the mind, especially in the matter of intercourse with those who have

been dearly loved, and who are lost to us. It may be that to one has been vouchsafed the proof he craves for, through some message, some private test, some little clue that speaks at once to his heart. But in recording this occurrence, frequently almost too sacred for publicity, he forgets that others have not the same means of judging that he has, and to them his language of enthusiasm and exaggerated joy seem only as the over-wrought utterances of a crazy brain.

Or, again, one séance out of many is recorded, perhaps anonymously. No fair evidence is given; no test recorded. These, it may be, have been applied before, and conviction has been established, and tests are no longer useful. Yes; but the narrator forgets, in his enthusiasm, that his letter is isolated, its statements loose, its phenomena astounding. And so the neophyte reads, wonders, and is repelled. "These men," he says, "do not know what the laws of evidence and the rules of logic mean."

THE NEED FOR DISCRETION.

It would be better, I earnestly believe, that no accounts should be presented to the public except such as will stand the test of cross-examination. Many, very many, would so be excluded; but the world would be the better for it, and fewer stumbling-blocks would be laid in the inquirer's way. I know that there are many facts for which chapter and verse cannot be given—many occurrences round which clings the odour of affection, that cannot be exposed to the rude blasts of criticism. I know it well; and I would say, "Keep such for private satisfaction, and for future use. The time will come when such records will find their place, and when the feelings of the living will no longer need to be spared; and, if not, the test, hallowed by sacred memories, will lose none of its value if you keep it consecrated to the purpose for which it was originally given."

I shall probably command the assent of all reasonable persons when I say that to the uninstructed mind—to the mind that is not familiar with the phenomena of Spiritualism—many of the records must read strangely lax, both in method of observation and in language. We, who write too frequently, sometimes forget that some who read have no antecedent knowledge, and that what to us is familiar is very strange to them. We should consciously remember that no man ought to be asked to assent to such facts and truths as we propound for public acceptance—facts new and strange, and not only that, but transcending, and, in some cases, reversing previous experience—save on the most exact and complete evidence. It is an insult to intelligence to expect belief on any other basis; and the converts, let me say, that could be so obtained are not of the highest order of mind.

And while I am on this topic, I must ask your permission to say one word more. It is not only inexpedient and wrong to publish inaccurate and loose records, but it is not always wise to print—still less to recount with all the emphasis of enthusiasm—even exact records of very extraordinary phenomena, unless they can be attested by such a weight of testimony as to make it impossible for a fair mind to reject the record. I believe that it is not wise to force too strong meat on those who are not prepared to digest it. Let me not be mistaken. I mean exactly what I say. I do not think it wise to tax the belief of those who are not familiar with the subject. It is all so strange, so subversive of previous experience, that I counsel discretion. The ancients were wise when they maintained the esoteric circle as well as the exoteric.

It is within my knowledge that much harm has been done on many occasions by injudiciously forcing on unprepared minds what seem to them monstrous narrations of unexplained and inexplicable occurrences. The digestion turns, and the bewildered hearer says, "I could have stood a little of that,

but this is a little too much." Depend upon it, there is philosophy in that remark. The growth must be gradual, and should be made so. Forcing is bad in all ways. The fruit looks well, but it has no flavour. The plant is luxuriant, but it will not stand the cold wind. The inquirer so treated is very apt to turn sick.

I have already trespassed beyond my limits, and have not said half that occurs to me. It is no part of my business now to point out how the inquirer may avoid the pitfalls that lie in his way, nor to say how the enforced methods of investigation of which he is the helpless victim aggravate his difficulties. It is more to the point now that I draw your attention to the fact that many of the inquirer's difficulties are of his own making. They spring, as I have tried to show, from ignorance, from arrogance, from a biassed mind, from wilful or unconscious one-sidedness of view, from a fixed determination to seek for one (perhaps unattainable) end, from excitement and enthusiasm, and from lack of calm and dispassionate and patient painstaking investigation.

APPENDIX VI.

SPIRIT-IDENTITY—EVIDENCE OF DR. S. T. SPEER.*

To the Editor of the "Spiritualist."

SIR,—The enclosed spirit communications, given through the mediumship of a gentleman well known to yourself, are so remarkable as bearing upon the question of an outside independent intelligence and of identity, that my egotism in submitting them to the readers of the *Spiritualist* may possibly be pardoned.

The singular character of these communications lies in this: that perhaps upon no single point that could be mentioned is the medium so absolutely devoid of all ordinary information as upon matters musical; whilst the details here given of the lives of certain old ecclesiastical musicians, purporting to have influenced my son (a boy of fourteen), are so minute, and so absolutely accurate in every respect, that no living musician, albeit trained from childhood in a cathedral choir, could, without reference to a musical biography, afford such information.

I may add that, at present, every manifestation occurring in our circle has apparently for its object the establishment of the all-important question of *identity*.

STANHOPE T. SPEER, M.D., Edin.

Dudley Villa, Shanklin, Isle of Wight,

January 19th, 1874.

In order to render intelligible the following curious communications, it is necessary to premise that they relate to a son of Dr. Speer's, a boy of fourteen. From the earliest years he has displayed remarkable musical ability, and has

* *Spiritualist*, January 23, 1874.

attracted notice from, and raised the highest expectations in, all who are able to judge of his compositions. So large a number of communications having been given on various subjects, Dr. Speer requested the medium to ascertain, if possible, whether any musical spirits were concerned as the boy's guides. It was in reply to this request that the sub-joined information was given. The information given was unknown to the medium; indeed, it is so minute in detail that it could only be verified at some considerable trouble through a friend who consulted a biographical dictionary of music. The names given are such as would be unknown to any, except persons who were versed in the history of church music. The curious point is, that the compositions of the boy were markedly influenced by the peculiar style of the composer, who was declared from this independent source to be concerned with him at the time. Even more details than those here printed were given; but enough is quoted to show the tenor of the writings.

[*April 14th, 1873.*] *Can you give me any information about C——'s guides?*

C——n is principally guided by an earnest and very thoughtful spirit, who was in earth life a member of that same family from which came Janet Nares Lydgate and John Lydgate, with whom you have communicated. His name was James Nares.

Was he a musician?

Yes; like C——n, he played with great skill upon the organ, and was organist to the king, and master of the royal choristers.

How came he to be attracted to C——?

Spirit guides are not always attracted. Sometimes they are selected for their own fitness. They are naturally apt to teach. Sometimes they are sent with a special commission. Sometimes they are picked out because they are able to supply that which is wanting in the character, which they

are to train. Sometimes they themselves select a character which they wish to mould. This is a great pleasure to the higher spirits. Sometimes they desire, for their own spiritual progress, to be attached to a soul the training of which is irksome and difficult. They toil upward along with the soul. Sometimes they are attracted by pure affinity, or by remains of earth-love. The guide in this case was appointed because he too on earth was an accomplished musician at an early age. When organist at York, not yet twenty years old, he won great renown.

[April 20th, 1873, I have ascertained that the information is correct.] Where was Dr. Naves born ?

At Stanwell. His father was under the Earl of Abingdon. *Who trained him ?*

Gates first, and then Pepusch. The former was master of the royal choristers.

Where was his first appointment ?

As deputy to Dr. Pigott, at Windsor, and finally to Dr. Salisbury, at York. There it was that the old man scorned him as a child, and that he played a very difficult service, although at half a note below the pitch, so that he brought it into the key of seven sharps. He succeeded Dr. Green as organist to the king ; and also filled the place of his old master, Gates. To him, friend, you owe the first introduction of expressive melody into church music.

Is he the only guide ?

No ; there are others. The Brothers Lawes.

Give me facts. I especially want tests of identity. The minutest facts.

They were pupils of old Caperario ; sons of a Vicar-Choral of Canterbury they were in earth-life. William, the elder brother, was a friend of young King Charles I. He composed fantasias for the viol, songs, and masques. Henry, the younger, was a friend of Milton and Waller. Milton wrote the "Comus" for him, but the music was lost.

I never heard of them. Can you tell me when they lived ?

[After a pause.] Henry passed to the spirit land in 1662, William in 1645.

[September 12th, 1873.] *I should like to have the scraps of information which have been lately given put into a connected shape. The great question in my mind is that of identity. Any minute points which you can give I will test. All you have said as yet is literally true.*

We will give every proof that is in our power. Indeed these minute details are worthless save for your conviction. Until that is established little more can be done. Therefore we devote ourselves to demonstrating the reality of those who, themselves unseen, communicate with you.

Benjamin Cooke is now greatly concerned with C——n, being attracted to him by similarity of taste. He in the life of earth was early developed as a musical genius. It was, I think, before he reached the age of fourteen years that he performed upon the organ of Westminster Abbey. Like James Nares, who has communicated to you, he was a pupil of Pepusch and of Gates, both of whom he succeeded in their work.

Is the spirit himself present ?

He is here.

Will he reply to me in detail ?

He will give you proofs. He was born in 1730, and had progressed under care of Pepusch so far that he was sub-organist of Westminster Abbey in 1742. He succeeded his master Pepusch as principal of the Academy of Ancient Music; and Gates as organist and lay-clerk of the Abbey, as well as master of the boys. He was then 32 years old. As a child he was a prodigy of musical talent, and therein has great sympathy with your boy.

Is he the Dr. Cooke whose name we found at the head of a chant ? The Christian name was not given.

Yes; he obtained the degree of Doctor of Music from the

University of Cambridge in 1775, when his anthem "Behold how good and joyful" was performed as exercise for his degree.

Did he write any considerable work?

We do not know what you call a considerable work. It was as a secular composer that he most shone, though he was organist of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. He wrote much for the Catch Club. Collin's "Ode to the Passions" was among his longer works. He passed over at the age of 63.

The other spirit is Wellesley, Earl of Mornington. He too was early developed. His father played the violin, and the child delighted in the instrument. He played it as soon as his infant hands could grasp it. At nine years old he composed, without any earthly instructor, a serenata for the violin. This was under spirit guidance.

And he had no masters at all?

He composed so well that Gemminiani and Rosengrave could give him no assistance.

These are now concerned with C—n.

HIGHER ASPECTS
OF
SPIRITUALISM.

BY
M.A. (OXON.),
AUTHOR OF "PSYCHOGRAPHY" AND "SPIRIT-IDENTITY."

LONDON :
LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LIMITED
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1908

The first edition of the *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*, by the REV. W. STAINTON MOSES (M.A., Oxon.), has long been out of print, but the demand for it continues, and as the second edition of *Spirit-Identity* has been exhausted the Council of the London Spiritualist Alliance, in response to the requests of many friends, have decided to reprint both of these works in one volume as an affectionate tribute to the memory of the author, who was the original promoter and the first President of the Alliance, and for a number of years the Editor of *Light*.

"The Old Spiritualism, born of Myth and fed upon Tradition, is dying, surely dying. A new and living Spiritualism is as surely taking its place. The Old Spiritualism was based on Belief: the new is founded on the facts of a common experience."

GERALD MASSEY.

"Stains will mar the noblest revolutions, but must not blind us to the fact that a spiritual revolution follows only on a spiritual need."

"The end of the Oracles was determined not from without, but from within. They had passed through all their stages. Fetishism, Shahmanism, Nature worship, Polytheism, even Monotheism and Mysticism had found in turn a home in their immemorial shrines. Their utterances had reflected every method in which man had sought communion with the unseen from systematic experiment to intuitive ecstasy. They had completed the cycle of their scripture from its Theogony to its Apocalypse: *it was time that a stronger wave of Revelation should roll over the world, and that what was best and truest in the old religion should be absorbed into and identified with the new.*"

F. W. H. MYERS on GREEK ORACLES.

"The world has cycles in its course, when all,
That once has been, is acted o'er again;
Not by some fated law, which need appal
Our faith, or binds our deeds as with a chain,
But by men's separate sins, which blended still
The same bad round fulfil

"Then fear ye not, tho' Gallio's scorn ye see,
And soft-clad nobles count you mad, true hearts!
These are the fig-tree's signs: rough deeds must be,
Trials and crimes: so learn ye well your parts.
*Once more to plough the earth it is decreed,
And scatter wide the seed.*"

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

PREFACE.

SPIRITUALISM is a subject much maligned and misunderstood: discredited by friends and misrepresented by enemies.

The newspaper-reading public gains its notions from such stray paragraphs as creep into print when some fresh exposure of fraud gives room for a sneer to writers who are neither generally nor specially informed on the subject, so as to handle it with reasonable fairness.

A highly-coloured narrative, a few old sneers, some cheap moral indignation, a stock jest or two, threadbare long since with age,—this is their recipe. The order has gone forth to write the subject down, and they obey. They can do little else, even if they would. For it must be said, to the eternal disgrace of what boasts to be a free press, that we have no journal that will, or perhaps that dare, give a perfectly fair and full hearing to writers who can defend Spiritualism from personal knowledge. The subject is tabooed as being likely to imperil circulation and impair influence.

The result is, that only one side—that calculated to discredit the subject—is presented to the public.

What wonder then that the general public that hears

of Spiritualism only through its daily paper, entertains an utterly false notion with regard to it, viewing it only as a melancholy picture of chicanery and credulity, and a grotesque jumble of blasphemy, buffoonery, and fraud.

And even if a mind be found that is willing to look below the surface, the feeling of distaste is too often intensified by the pretensions recklessly put forward by the enthusiastic devotees of Spiritualism. Such a mind knows nothing of the inner and higher aspects of the subject; and the claim that the banjo playing and furniture shuffling, the antics and ineptitudes of the ordinary dark circle are the work of our departed friends who take this remarkable method of proving to us their continued life and happiness, is so monstrous that a well balanced mind recoils in disgust as from a profanation and a blasphemy.

Both by what is said and by what is not said, by what is done and by what is left undone. Spiritualism is degraded and made mean in the eyes of the public.

I protest against this view as dishonouring, one-sided and unjust, as calculated to mislead an honest man who seeks for truth; and, above all, as calculated to foster and perpetuate that worst of all falsehoods, a half-truth.

I protest that Spiritualism is not the unclean thing that it suits its enemies to make it out to be.

I protest that it is not the silly thing that its friends (alas!) too often depict it as being.

It has a noble side of which the world hears little, and

which it heeds less. When a Crookes tells the scientific world that he is about to investigate the subject, he is hailed as "a Daniel come to judgment ; yea, a Daniel:" But when he reports that *the facts are true*, the scientific world will have none of them, and Daniel would lose his reputation as a man of science, did he not redeem it by some more material, and therefore more popular investigations.

When a Newton relieves suffering humanity by his power of healing, the world laughs at human credulity, but makes no account of the fact that the load of human misery is thereby lightened.

When Spiritualism releases an enslaved mind from the terrorism of a degrading creed, and lifts it into an atmosphere of light and love from one of ignorance and slavish fear, by showing the realities of the world to come, the world sneers loftily about enthusiasm and fanaticism, as it would sneer again at a Christ were he among men.

The world knows nothing of the consolations of the family circle : nothing of the light that has beamed there on many a mind that had come to despair of a future existence, and was driven well-nigh to distraction by the problems of the present. It knows little of Spiritualism as a Religion, nor of the extent to which its teachings are permeating modern thought, leavening the churches, and giving a truer and nobler faith to many a soul that sorely needed it.

In short, the world either ignores or is ignorant of what seems to me to be the great claim of Spiritualism on the attention of men of thought in an age which is marked by a startling development of scientific Materialism, with its dreary shadow Atheism, and by an equally ominous decadence of true spiritual life.

It is with a view of presenting some of the *HIGHER ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALISM* that I have put together these Essays; the former dealing with the general condition of the public movement, and with some requirements for its proper guidance and conduct: the latter sketching the parallel between the age of Christ and this age of ours, and shadowing forth the contrasts between Christianity and Christian Spiritualism—the Old Faith and the New.

M. A. (OXON.).

LONDON,

Easter, 1880.

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THE
PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE NEEDS
OF
SPIRITUALISM IN ENGLAND.

*Being an Address delivered before the British National Association
of Spiritualists, on January 26, 1880.*

My subject is so wide that it may seem a hopeless task to master it within any reasonable limits. So no doubt it would be, if I aimed at any exhaustive treatment. But I do not. I am not going to be mystical or metaphysical: I am not going to offend any prejudices by attempting to set up any particular standard of belief, or to decry any that commends itself to any of my brethren of that very large, and not always, externally at least, very happy family which is called by the name of Spiritualist.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUALIST?

It is a little difficult to find out sometimes who and what a Spiritualist is. Lord Rayleigh, I read in a public journal, is "an ardent Spiritualist," but nevertheless, the writer is kind enough to say he will make a good successor to Professor Clerk Maxwell. My late lamented friend, Serjeant Cox, is being claimed by Spiritualists of undoubted orthodoxy as one in belief with themselves, while the outside world regarded him

always as an enthusiast on the subject, as indeed he was in some sort. He was what I may call a Psychist; and I suppose I may call Lord Rayleigh and men of his type who attest the phenomena without advancing any theory to account for them, Phenomenalists. They would themselves disdain the name of Spiritualists, and regard it as a nickname affixed by ignorance or spite. These are dwellers on the threshold (not, however, of the type described in *Zanoni*), and hardly come within the sphere of our contemplation now, except in the way of passing acknowledgment of the excellent work they perform in introducing the outer fringe of the subject acceptably to a class of mind that otherwise would not be brought into contact with it at all.

Within the undoubted domain of Spiritualism we have numerous shades of opinion. The Phenomenalist obtains here as well as outside; for a most assured belief in the operation of spirits as the efficient cause is quite compatible with an almost exclusive interest in the phenomena themselves.

Others are devoted to the purely sentimental or emotional side of spirit-communion. To them the circle is the family altar, round which the ties dissolved by death are temporarily re-united, and they live again in holiest communion with their dead. Nothing to them is of any pressing import except this sacred fellowship. They care little whether others accredit their belief, or whether any phenomena come home to the world at large, or to scientific experts. They would desire in the abstract that all should be partakers of the privileges they themselves enjoy: but practically their experience is too sacred to them to be rudely handled by the outer world, which would probe, and pry, and ask cold questions, and so they shrink into seclusion, and seek only to be left alone. How many of such there are of whom the world never hears, Spiritualists *par excellence* as regards their faith, none but such as are behind the scenes can even roughly guess. With

exceptional means in some ways of knowing, I am more and more astonished year by year at the extent to which this most private and personal form of Spiritualism—the very core and kernel of the movement—obtains amongst us, and especially in country districts. The simple folk who swell the numbers of those of whom I now speak are not perplexed by any doubts: the intellectual questionings that beset more subtle minds pass over their heads with a harmless whirring which only causes them to look up in surprise: they have something like—the best modern imitation I know of—that over-mastering Faith, on which the paralysis of Doubt has never fallen, which Eastern hyperbole declared capable of moving mountains. So long as these do not fail from amongst us—and they increase and will increase, I have no fear—we shall never lack Spiritualists.

PHILOSOPHICAL SPIRITUALISM.

Of late another class of Spiritualists, the Philosophical Spiritualist, has come into some prominence. He seeks to penetrate below the surface, and to apply to the subject of Modern Spiritualism the dark hints and cunning speculations of the Ancients and Mediævalists. If his mind be metaphysical he will concern himself with speculations as to the nature of Matter, Time, Space, and the various ideas which men have framed, and which have gradually assumed a position of reality in our arguments to which they are not entitled. If he be a Platonist, he will be attracted by the modern school of whom Henry More and Thomas Taylor are perhaps the best examples. Theosophical leanings will correlate him intellectually with the abstruse system of Jacob Behmen, and land him in a state of mind when the exoteric phenomena of Spiritualism will no longer interest but rather will disgust, and when, in point of fact, he will cease to be a Spiritualist, in any fair and usual sense of the word altogether.

A middle course has given rise to another school of Modern Theosophists, recruited principally from the ranks of philosophical Spiritualists, and devoted both to the observation (though in a minor degree) of the phenomena called Spiritual, to speculation as to their cause, and especially to the study of *the innate powers of the human spirit.* They usually deny or make light of what to the Spiritualist is his central article of faith—the return of the departed : but they do a very necessary work in calling attention to what Spiritualists too often ignore, the potency of the human spirit ; and they set us also an example that many may well follow, of intelligent reasoning and investigation respecting phenomena the mere surface explanation of which we are too often ready to accept without inquiry until we find that “ things are not always what they seem.” There should be no antagonism at all between the Spiritualist pure and simple, who lives in the practice of communion with his departed, and the Theosophist who brings a speculative philosophy to bear on the facts presented by the Spiritualist : indeed the union of the two minds would seem to be the desideratum. But as a matter of fact the Theosophist is a little inclined to question and perhaps to ridicule Spiritualism—he has not far to go in order to find material for his scoffs ;—and the Spiritualist is a little inclined to resent this by bringing him down from the airy region of unproven speculations to the domain of fact. This, however, is mere surface friction, and nothing but good can result from the intercourse of men of all shades of opinion who will bring honest, fearless, and impartial thought to bear on the great “ problems of life and mind ” which concern us all.

RELIGIOUS SPIRITUALISM.

This class embraces also some representatives of a school of thought which is spreading very widely in the ranks of

Spiritualists both in this country and in America—I mean Religious Spiritualism. I do not use a narrower term because Spiritualists, who see in the midst of the apparent chaos that surrounds them the dawnings of law and order as the Spirit of God broods over its waste, do not always take the same view of the Supreme. The Spiritualist, who regards the abnormal conditions produced by the action of Spirit in this world as merely the phenomenal manifestation attendant on the close of one dispensation, era, or epoch, and the ushering in of a new *régime*, with wider spiritual knowledge, and clearer insight into Truth,—is by no means at one on all religious topics with his equally earnest brother. Theological training, or the absence of it, will tell; and one mind rebounds from a narrow cramping Christianity miscalled orthodoxy, to a broad and rather shadowy Theism, or to a still more shadowy Pantheism; while another rests in the familiar by-paths of the creed of its childhood, and sees no reason to love any the less dearly the lessons of faith learnt from a mother's lips, or to discard the old well-worn prayers to which the association of scenes past for ever lend such a mellowing influence.

These minds are infinitely varying in their conceptions of God, of His dealings with man, and of man's necessary relations to Him. As time rolls by these views will harmonise, and out of their fusion will come what I think I can dimly discern in bold outline, looming through the mists that hang around me—the Religion of the Future. Be this as it may, the great cause for congratulation that strikes me in the outlook that I am attempting to take, is this undoubted inclination on the part of thoughtful Spiritualists to look beyond the surface phenomena, even beyond what I may call, without offence, the emotional aspect of the subject, and to dwell increasingly on its religious side, and to regard the vast movement as essentially a spiritual effort analogous to many that have preceded it, which has a beneficent aim for human-

ity. I look with confidence to the increased prevalence of this feeling and tone to rescue the movement from much that was in danger of defiling it in the eyes of those who viewed it from without, and who saw its superficial blots without knowing the beauties and blessings that are below.

SPIRITUALISM IS A REVOLUTION.

For it is vain to expect that a movement so wide as Spiritualism, one animated by such divergent influences, one that appeals to so many types of mind, one that naturally draws into relation with it all the restless, speculative, curious, and often unevenly balanced minds that mankind is always plentifully furnishing; one too that seethes and bubbles in the midst of an age of excitement and excess, physical and intellectual too:—it is idle to expect that such a movement will not present to the hostile critic aspects of disorder, and even of license, which will furnish him with ample opportunity for assault.

“Spiritualism,” as Mr. F. F. Cook points out in an able paper, *The Rationale of Spiritualism*, read before the Chicago Philosophical Society, “is Revolution, not simply Reform.” This is exactly the view that I have long had impressed upon me. There is very little conservative about it; little that is orderly, any more than there was in the great Revolution that left us Christianity. It is an upheaval, and is attended with all the apparent disorder and chaotic confusion of an earthquake. It is not in a transition epoch, nor amid the very birth-throes of a new dispensation, that we are to expect a Reform of the drawing-room order, nicely cut and dried in the study of its originator, patronised by the Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry, and accomplished by the decorous moving and seconding of some nicely-worded resolutions. It is no time for polite patching-up: we are in the very dust and din of

spiritual strife, in the thick of a great spiritual conflict, the effects of which we shall try in vain to escape ; and it is no time now to go about deprecating noise, and timidly sprinkling rose-water to quench the powder-fumes of battle. The battle is upon us, and it is waste of time to grumble at its smoke and din.

In order rightly to estimate the progress of the movement, it is necessary to view it from within, and from the standpoint of the Spiritualist. In no other way can any clue be got to what seem its manifold absurdities, contradictions, and vulgarities, to say nothing of other more serious blemishes. In the pamphlet already referred to Mr. Cook points out with much shrewdness and force, that the movement which we call Spiritualism is controlled and governed by spiritual methods from a spiritual plane, and that what we see around us here are the results of causes over which we have comparatively little command. Its originators deal with the class of mind that is not concerned with logical definitions and exact modes of thought, the class out of which come ardent enthusiasm, vigorous action untrammelled by any modifying views, and the revolutionary force that has always been liberated when the world is temporarily turned upside down. The educated and cultured mind sees too many sides of a question to be the suitable agent for commencing such a revolution as Christianity was, and as this is. It was the fishermen of Galilee who were the co-workers with Jesus ; it was the common people who heard Him gladly. And now, it is not from among the Pharisees and rulers of modern society, so much as from the ranks of the simpler and plainer folk ; not in the laboratory of the scientist, or amid the experiments of learned and scientific bodies, so much as in the family circle, in the homes of those who have no other claim to a public acceptance of their record than that they have ears to hear and eyes to see with, and a desire to record with truth what they see and hear ; it is to these, and not to the wise and

cultured and highly placed that the weight of evidence first came with such startling force.*

THE DIRECTING AGENCY.

There is indication now, however, that the place of the cultured and trained mind in the development of the movement is being shown. If it be enthusiasm and zeal, which does not stop to reason, that sets such movements as Christianity and Modern Spiritualism in action, it is discriminating and calm judgment that shapes their ends and directs the force that enthusiasm has liberated. It is in this precise state that one of the most real dangers to such a movement is felt. If it become a fashionable toy, its end is not far to seek; but, if it refuse the aid of power, wealth, and position, it fails to utilise one of the very greatest factors in success, and stands self-confessed as unable to reach the most cultured classes of the community. Between these two poles the choice lies, and one of the greatest difficulties in the way of the governors of this movement is to use as not abusing, neither to scorn nor to cringe; and, if I may adapt an expression that seems singularly appropriate, "to be *in* the world but not *of* the world," not removed from the world, but kept from the evil that is in it.

It is a source of consolation to reflect that the leaders of this movement are wiser than we, and that they occupy a plane of development, and a vantage ground of observation from which they can see through the dust of strife, and mark the progress that the future brings. But we have to do our part in subordination, and it is in this co-operation that we find ourselves confronted with a difficulty, and that we are forced

* It is well to note this. For the world hears much of the efforts of certain minds to correlate themselves by personal experience with such of the phenomena of Spiritualism as may be expected to lend themselves to scientific demonstration. And every now and then the failure of some such effort is trumpeted abroad; and, now and again, too, the exposure of a fraud, consequent on such attempts, makes Spiritualism nauseous in the eyes of those who know it under no other guise, and presents a very unlovely aspect of it to those who do know what is beneath. But the world hears and knows little or nothing of the Spiritualism of private life.

to present to a superficial observer a picture of disunion when we are really striving for peace. Except on the veriest external plane, anything like real association in spiritual matters is very difficult of attainment. And this for obvious reasons. We are all of us on different planes of progression—spirits gaining our experience in the great school of incarnate life, and each learning our lessons with different measure of success; possibly, too, starting in the school with different degrees of antecedent experience. At any rate, in spiritual progress you will not find two persons occupying planes exactly alike. So long as merely external matters are being organised or discussed, no inner spring is touched, and superficial agreement is possible. But it is different when we come to deal with the inner verities of spirit; then the innermost springs are touched, and entire coincidence of opinion is not to be had from those who view vital questions from different standpoints. Entire agreement is so far from being desirable, that it is easy to see that its existence, if it were possible, would betoken an absence of that healthy friction which is inseparable even from reform, and much more from such revolution as I have estimated Spiritualism to be.

Divergence then there must be, and from time to time this is made manifest, and circumstances arise to emphasise the fact that all cannot see eye to eye when the deep things of spirit are concerned. But the points of agreement may equally be insisted on, and I am animated by the hope that the future may draw out these points of contact, may give us opportunities of cultivating that spiritual grace of *charity* or *active love*, which is scared away by the din of our unwelcome strife, but without which, now as in the days when the words were first used, we are but as “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.”

INDIVIDUAL NOTIONS TO BE SUBORDINATED.

Peace and progress are, probably, incompatible here, except in the silent growth of the individual spirit by contemplation,

meditation, and prayer. Progress in a public movement means friction. Abuses cannot be reformed without raising dust ; and there are some who delight in wielding the iconoclastic hammer of demolition, just as there are others who love peace, and are, practically, unable to distinguish it from sleep ; who welcome anything for a quiet life, even paralysis and death. These were not born to take an active part in revolutionary work. From those who are forced into activity *the movement has one boon to ask, by which, if granted and perpetually borne in mind, its future progress will be largely helped.*

It is, that minor points of difference be consciously kept out of view while we stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of the truth we hold in common. The time will never come when we shall all agree on everything. I hope that that pale drab uniformity, that dead level of commonplace, on which anything like vigorous life would perish of inanition, will never come. At any rate I don't expect, any more than I want, to live to see it. But I do hope to see more of what I may call mental perspective among Spiritualists. Many of us seem to have our minds filled with the contemplation of some extremely small matter, which we have gazed at until its proportions are magnified out of all truth, and we forget in contending for it how valuable effort is being wasted, and withdrawn from the central point where it is really needed. If, as I entirely believe, all truth is evolved by conflict with error, and if these spiritual truths, of which we are now the recipients, are born in our world by conflict with the foes of progress, how important that we should direct our weapons against them instead of wasting force in fruitless contention about trifles amongst ourselves. I do not want uniformity ; but I want unity in multi-formity. I want a little self-sacrifice of pet notions, even though they be ever so dear to our minds, as the children of our mature intellectual life. I want a resolute eye fixed on central truth, contending for it,

and not to be diverted from it by any tricks of any foe. If there be spiritual adversaries who would stop the spread of a truth that they hate, surely one of their most successful devices must be to set every one of us fighting for his own hand.

And the inevitable result of this magnifying of private whims to the exclusion of deep self-sacrificing devotion to the great truths which we hold in common, is seen in a tendency to pettiness and smallness of aim, which does especially impress those who regard us from an external and generally unsympathetic point of view. Crotchety, full of cranks and notions, viewy, one-idea'd, unpractical, unfit for active useful work in the world; these are some of the charges that I hear brought against us. *They are not true*; there will rise to the minds of all who hear me, names of men eminent in the walks of daily life, not only as men of science, art, and letters, but as practical men of business, dealing with the world on its most unsentimental side, and dealing with it in that way which is the world's great measure of success—the acquisition of wealth—who are sufficient to refute any such wholesale calumny. *They are not true*: but there is enough foundation, through our own fault, to give just that superficial verisimilitude that makes a half-truth the most dangerous of falsehoods.

SPIRITUALISM DEALS WITH THE MOOT QUESTIONS OF
THE AGE.

I can see, I think, how necessary it is that this great spiritual solvent should be brought to bear on all subjects that affect at all intimately the social well-being of man. Spiritualism comes, as I have tried to show, as a revolutionary element to an age that is ripe for it, and like that great movement of which it is the nineteenth century analogue, it deals with all the relations and inter-relations of man with man, and man with God. See how it touches the position of

women, just as the teaching of the Christ did, though in another way. See how it lays its hand on the broad questions of civil and religious liberty, proclaiming the liberty wherewith the truth makes men free, so that they are free indeed. There is not a problem that the world is face to face with in these days of vexed questions and conflicting interests, on which Spiritualism has not or will not have its say.

And so it is to be expected that those on whose minds strong views have been borne in as to any of the moot questions of the hour, should turn with expectation, or should instinctively find their way, to the ranks of Spiritualism. They dimly see that there they will find, among minds gathered by a process of spiritual selection, minds to whom the notion of progress and reform is one familiar as a household word, that sympathy and attention which they do not expect, or are very foolish if they do, in the fellowship of those who find in the wisdom of their forefathers a subject of never-failing admiration, and in their enactments the embodiment of a sagacity that it would be sacrilege to interfere with. They are welcome to our sympathy, and we recognise their claims on us, being what we are. Children of the new dispensation—the spiritual epoch—we welcome them as brethren whose faces, like our own, are turned to watch for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, the dawning of the coming day. But we desire to impress upon these strenuous souls that reforms are best inaugurated by a judicious choice of opportunity, and that to press unwelcome change on unwilling minds is one ready method of making it impossible. And we would urge that zeal be tempered with discretion.

We have quite enough to do to look after the points on which we are agreed without emphasising those on which we claim liberty of opinion. And we may, surely, unite on the central facts, and devote our chiefest energy to their elucidation.

I have said that I regard that providential system to which

the incongruous name of Spiritualism has been given, as concerned with all the great problems that arise in this age. Divinely ordered and spiritually guided, it is nothing short of an effort to wipe out some results of human ignorance and folly, and to replace them with advanced knowledge so applied as to ameliorate the condition of man in all the various relations of his earthly life. It is therefore impossible for me, holding this belief, to impose any barriers on the action of this great movement. It deals with all that influences humanity, and I cannot measure the action of Spiritualism in any of the great efforts that I see around me for the benefit of mankind. The world of cause is hidden from my gaze, and here I see only the effects.

But I entertain no doubt that from that world emanate the motive springs of much that I see in operation around me, and I have no doubt too that disorderly human effort combines frequently with antagonistic spiritual assault to thwart the beneficent work of progress. It is extremely desirable that, as co-workers with these ministering spirits, we should labour with discretion as well as with zeal. It is even to be desired that we should supply a knowledge of our human life, its possibilities, capacities, and conditions, which spirits far removed from the earth plane do not possess. And to this end it is surely most undesirable that the movement should present to the observer a picture of undisciplined and incoherent struggle: one enthusiast contending with another for some point, which may, or may not, be true in fact, but which, at any rate, obscures the broad principle on which we ought to unite. Let us look to our foundations, and let us leave accidents alone while we look clearly after essentials.

I protest, for instance, against being called upon, as a Spiritualist, to identify myself with all the numerous fancies that my fellow-thinkers on that subject are fond of mixing up with it. I will entertain on its merits the notion of any reform; if I were not so inclined, I should probably not have

taken any active part in Spiritualism ; but Woman's Rights, the Reform of the Lunacy Laws, to say nothing of other questions that have at various times been imported into Spiritualism, I should like to consider as independent questions. To force them on one *quâ* Spiritualist seems to me a grotesque absurdity. I am quite as desirous that every woman should have her rights, whatever they may be, as I am determined to secure my own ; and I am quite sure she can be trusted to get them. As to the Reform of Lunacy Laws, that is trenching on delicate ground here, and in connection with Spiritualism. I should like to see Spiritualism vindicated on its own merits.

UNITY IN MULTIFORMITY.

No estimate of the position and outlook of Spiritualism would be in any way complete without some attempt to offer an opinion on the methods by which we may best advance the cause that we have at heart.

In some sense the simplest and plainest answer is:—By leaving it in wiser hands than our own. Half the troubles and worries that beset the cause of Spiritualism come from our own folly ; and a considerable proportion of the remainder from misdirected zeal. And this is seen most conspicuously in public effort, for the very plain reason that private efforts are less known and less important.

This is one of the standing reasons given by some Spiritualists, whose faith is quite as clear and whose works are quite as zealously carried out as our own, for the policy of abstention with regard to organisation. Is this system, then, which we have put in practice here, a mistake ? Do I recommend a policy of isolation ? The previous part of my paper, in which I appeal as strongly as I can to all Spiritualists, as such, to sink their differences and to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of their common faith, will sufficiently

indicate the answer I should give to those questions. I entirely believe that organisation, on the simple lines I have mentioned, would be an unmixed blessing; and I should expect from it great and beneficent results. It could never, I think, give to the chance enquirer the conviction to be got only from private investigation. It could never supply the place of the family circle—never even presume to interfere with that stronghold of our faith. But as a *defensive* organisation, capable of becoming *offensive* too under unrighteous attack, it seems to me to be almost a necessity. It is one of the glories of the British National Association of Spiritualists which will never fade, that it saved Slade when other means would have been almost hopeless.

It is needless to say that the isolation of working members from any organisation is a cause of weakness, or that the multiplication of centres of organisation leads to a frittering away of power. The principle of organised effort is as sound, in my opinion, now as it has always been, in spite of certain shocks that have made it wise to revise that opinion; but the application of the principle is, as I have pointed out, a matter of grave difficulty. To be really effective, a national organisation should be all-embracing—should draw sympathy and support from all phases of opinion—should represent them all, and should, on any emergency, while giving fullest liberty of thought, be able to calculate on united action. I need not say that English Spiritualists are very far from the realisation of *that* ideal.

LESSONS OF THE PAST.

It is impossible to speak of organised public Spiritualism at this juncture and in this place without reference to that melancholy event which has brought so much discredit on the cause. I allude to the discovery, at one of the Inquirers' Séances held on the premises of the Association, that the

medium was personating a spirit-form. Having been placed in a chair behind curtains, and tied to that chair, she was discovered in a state of partial undress, personating a form which was presented as independent of her body, while her discarded garments were found on the chair to which she had been secured. These salient facts are undisputed, though they involve many considerations which admit of argument. Into these I do not enter.*

But we are foolish indeed if we do not attempt to learn from experience. Let us dispassionately look at what we have done, and see how far we have done wrong. It is easy to be wise after the event, and there are always plenty of good-natured friends to come forward with their "I told you so"; but that should not prevent us from seeing ourselves as others see us, if only we can attain that position, one more calculated to develop wise and wholesome views than any other we can occupy.

And this we ought to do without any over-sensitiveness as to facing the results of our methods. We in this Association have exercised at least as much care as others have taken in conducting séances. In anything that I may say I entirely disclaim any idea of blaming anyone. I deal only with facts that are admitted. I carefully abstain from entering into the field of speculation; and I desire only to gather up the lessons that plain and reasonable investigators of a very dark and difficult subject ought to gather from experience. I believe the whole method of conducting materialisation séances to be erroneous, calculated to introduce elements of uncertainty, and to produce the results which we are compelled again and again to deplore. In the interests of all concerned these methods should, in my opinion, be abandoned. We should have more respect for our mediums, with their sensitive temperament, and liability to obsession by any

* For a full and very clear account of the whole circumstances, see *Spiritual Notes*, No. 20, Feb., 1880.

undeveloped spiritual agency that may seize upon them, than to place them deliberately under the very condition where such power may have fullest opportunity of possessing them. Under none but the happiest and most perfect conditions should they be exposed to such a risk. We should have more thought for the fair fame of the movement, and for the credit of all concerned in it, than to expose it to the danger of such association with what the world will surely brand as fraud. And we should hesitate long before we permit any, who have not familiarised themselves with the simpler objective phenomena of Spiritualism, to be introduced to the observation of a fact, which, seen under the best possible conditions, is astounding and almost staggering to the reason, but which, presented as it only too frequently is, amid conditions of darkness and secrecy that seem devised for the very purpose of mystification, can convince no one who is worth convincing, or who is not already satisfied by other means.

Now, on broad principles of criticism, let us see what has been the method almost universally observed in investigating these questions.

(1) We have attempted to show to a circle, composed largely of inquirers, gathered together on no other principle than that of a common curiosity—if I may exclude that of a desire to explode what, on *a priori* principles, many consider an impossible and ridiculous hypothesis—and selected on no principle of fitness, a phenomenon the most rare, the most difficult of satisfactory demonstration, even under the best possible conditions. We have assumed that this rare phenomenon was procurable at stated times, and we have allowed those who have no antecedent knowledge of the subject to come together for the purpose of witnessing it.

Was this wise? In my opinion it assuredly was not. If such phenomena are procurable at all in a mixed circle, it must be under very rare conditions, and the attempt to elicit them must frequently end in failure.

(2) But it does not always end in failure. It sometimes demonstrably ends in the substitution of another phenomenon altogether. The beings, whoever they may be, who produce these manifestations, are able to laugh at our bonds, and to release a medium from the most complicated ligatures. They do also, as has been repeatedly demonstrated, dress up the unconscious medium, and present her transformed and sometimes transfigured body as a "Spirit-form." Of the moral aspects of such a procedure I will say nothing. It is a fact well known to experienced Spiritualists that the Spirits who are able to deal with gross matter so as to produce these physical manifestations are beings who are not possessed of high moral consciousness. Whether they are instruments in the hands of more progressed intelligences or not, the fact remains that they can give no trustworthy information, that they are not to be relied on in many cases if judged by the laws of human integrity and truth, and that they do demonstrably, in some cases, enact what must be described as a fraud, of which the entranced medium is or may be unconscious. Now, since experienced Spiritualists know that such power resides in the beings with whom they have to do, is it not a duty to explain to those who know nothing of the subject, that they have such power, that they use it as they think fit, and that in any given case, unless absolute proof to the contrary is forthcoming, the form produced is most probably the transformed medium? In the vast majority of instances that have come under my observation, I believe this has been the case. And I think very decidedly that the fact should be plainly stated.

(3) But this is not all. It has been usual to seclude a medium from view by means of curtains or a cabinet. It is an old story now that I detest this method, and protest against the bewildering perplexities that it introduces into the investigation. I hope this exposure will at least abolish in public circles that mystifying device. It has, however,

been customary to use it. Now, when a medium is secluded from view, it is very difficult indeed to say with any certainty what takes place. She is bound to her chair, and if a form appears, and if, further, the medium and the form be seen at the same time, or if the medium be proved to be in her chair at the time that the observers see the form, there is good evidence for one special class of manifestation called Materialisation or Form-Manifestation. There is a compact and perfectly unimpeached body of evidence for the reality of this astounding phenomenon: and these exposures do not touch it.

If, again, the tying be secure, and a form be presented without any proof that the medium is in the chair, and if, further, she be found in her place with tying unmolested, after the séance is over, there is evidence of an interference with ordinary natural law by occult power, but no cogent evidence of materialisation. It is this phenomenon that I believe to be of the most frequent occurrence in cabinet séances. And, being as it is of a totally different order to that which inquirers come to see, when they find from observation that such is the case, they not unnaturally consider themselves duped.

Would not a plain statement of facts go far to prevent that idea? and should not such a statement precede every séance held in public for form-manifestation? I strongly think it should.

I would hope, however, that for the future we shall be content with eliciting such phenomena as can be had without secluding the medium, and with light sufficient for observation. I am so convinced that no method of public investigation that uses cabinets and dark séances can be satisfactory to any mind worth attracting to the movement, that I should prefer to see no séances at all on these premises than such as I have described.

At any rate, whether my own opinion commends itself to

you or not, we shall be agreed that it is our duty to present to inquirers, so long as we allow them to resort to us for information, nothing that can savour in the faintest degree to the most suspicious mind of fraud, whether the imposture be earthly or spiritual. Better that all séances should be stopped at once, than that another cause of distress, such as we have brought on ourselves, should occur. And better, too, that we should curtail the power of these irresponsible spirits to work mischief, and enact fraud, by placing the medium in a position where no such deception is possible. Dark circles should be relegated to private meetings when no tests are wanted, and where such séances have their place and their use.

EXPOSURES DO NOT AFFECT THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH.

There is a sort of feeling current amongst those who know nothing of Spiritualism beyond what they glean from the newspapers when some fresh exposure leads them to print a few contemptuous paragraphs, that the phenomena of Spiritualism are discredited *en masse*, and that the records of them are stories of imposture or delusion throughout. It is hardly necessary to say here that that is itself a curious delusion born of the wish that such might be found to be the case. The phenomena of Spiritualism are irrefragably established on too wide a basis of demonstration to be shaken : and, deplorable as these repeated shocks to weak faith undoubtedly are, the mediumship which is incriminated by them is a proven and assured fact. When we are more careful in our methods of eliciting these phenomena, we shall find that it is our own ignorance and folly that are, in very many cases, responsible for the results that we deplore.

On repeated occasions, as competent witnesses testify, when the medium has not been separated from the circle, figures

fully formed, apparently as solid and real to the touch as our own bodies are, have been presented under conditions which absolutely preclude deception or delusion. Mr. Barkas, of Newcastle, has repeatedly testified to this fact, and his precautions against deception leave nothing to be desired. Mr. Epes Sargent, of Boston, U.S.A., a man than whom none is more competent, from high character, long experience, and intellectual ability, to give evidence on this question, is unflinching in his testimony to what he has himself observed in the materialisation of figures or forms under irreproachable conditions of test. The literature of Spiritualism is full of such evidence, and though some of it be laxly stated, much of it can be got rid of only by supposing that the writers are consciously stating what is not true. The facts are substantially proven, whatever the explanation of them may be.

It has frequently occurred to me to wonder whether these phenomena are transitory, the signs of a transition epoch, to pass when it is over. And I find Mr. Cook, in the pamphlet to which I have already more than once referred,* giving utterance to the same feeling. "I am not of those who believe that the manifestations of spiritual power, now so general, will always abide with the race. They occur only in transition periods. . . . Hence I regard this as essentially a history-making epoch." It has been so before, as we know, and it may be so now. But if the phenomena do remain, and if we persist in dealing with them as we have been doing, it requires no prophet to foretell a constant crop of these exposures. The observant critic who turns his eye from this country to America will find the same condition of things. There, as here, popular Spiritualism presents features for which its adherents have good cause to blush. And so it will be to the end of this chapter of human folly; till we have learned our lesson in the only school that turns out instructed scholars—the school of hard and dearly-bought experience.

* *The Rationale of Spiritualism.*

LESSONS OF THE FUTURE.

It is just three years since, writing on the Slade case, in January, 1877, I took occasion to say, at some length, what seemed to me to be the broad aspects of Spiritualism, the mistakes of Spiritualism, and the necessities of the immediate future. Among these last I instanced the study of mediumship, and of the conditions under which its phenomena may successfully be evoked, the proper methods of holding public circles, and the need for care in eliciting spiritual phenomena. I have nothing to withdraw of what I then said. I have little to add, though three years' additional experience has deepened at once my conviction of the truth of what I then wrote, and my despair of seeing what I desire accomplished.*

It may be that we have been moving too fast, and that this great revolution requires a check that we may pause, and breathe, and learn a little wisdom. I think I can see that after every crisis in its history, when scorn is poured on its truth, and daylight is let in on its errors, it roots itself more firmly, spreads itself more widely, and is more a source of attraction than before. This may be, the beneficent purpose of what seems so hard a trial. Be this as it may, it behoves us to try at least to see what we are lacking in, and what we should avoid, as well as what we ought to do ; and, in recapitulating what I have said, I will endeavour to focus attention on these points. You will then see what is the outlook of the future as gleaned from the teaching of the past.

DESIDERANDA.

What do I desiderate ?

1. With respect to the phenomena of Spiritualism, I earnestly desire that in all circles to which inquirers are

* For the substance of the remarks alluded to, see Appendix.

admitted, the most careful means be adopted to present facts to them under conditions that avoid the very appearance of deception, that preclude the possibility of the pranks of a tricky spirit, and that admit of such observation as may satisfy a reasonable man. This involves, in my opinion, the abolition of all means of secluding the medium, and—though I do not lay so much stress on this—of dark circles also. Such phenomena only should be sought as can be had under these conditions.

2. To the end that our circles may be more reasonably conducted, I desire a careful study of mediumship, and of its phases, and of the circumstances under which its phenomena may safely be evoked. I am sure that the conditions under which ordinary public circles are usually held are fatal to the medium, and land the sitters in bewilderment, even when they do not induce spirit-imposture. We have no right to treat our mediums so. I, for one, am ashamed of the way in which their delicate powers are abused, and have a deep sympathy with them in all their efforts to do honest and satisfactory work.

3. With respect to the general aspects of Spiritualism, let us remember that when that ill-omened word is mentioned, there rises before the public mind a picture of the grotesque convulsions of furniture, emotional descriptions of equally grotesque séances, exposures of imposture, advocacy of crotchets, and general absurdity, as public opinion judges. Let us see to it that we present to the world some at least of the higher aspects of the much-maligned subject. It is not all of it the silly thing men think it. Let us rise to the plane of spirit, and teach men what we find there.

4. And for ourselves, esoterically, let us learn wisdom. We are a company whose faith is varied, whose private opinions are divergent. Let us have so much self-sacrifice as to keep our private fancies in the background, while we unite in defence of the common faith that is ours. Ephraim is

perpetually vexing Judah, and Judah is not slow to retaliate. Would that in the hallowing atmosphere when we unite in communion with those who have risen above the strifes of the lower world, we might learn to live in peace and unity with our brethren who are still by our side ; so far, at least, as love of truth, and zeal for its cause permit. The pitiful waste of force that each year shows, is one of the most melancholy aspects of the question.

5. And this, I believe, will never be remedied until we learn that Spiritualism without spirituality is a body without a soul—so little desirable that it is sure to lead its votaries to some form of physical, intellectual, or moral degradation ; so entirely to be deprecated that, even now, the whole movement suffers from its cultivation. When we learn to cherish Harmony and to love Peace, to aspire to a life of true spiritual vigour and health, to regard the phenomenal evidences of spirit action only as the signs and wonders that testify to the inner working of the inspiring and informing spirit that broods over the waste waters of our earthly life, to avoid the depths where linger the mist and fog of earth, and to rise to the heights where we may breathe the pure and invigorating air that braces the spirit within us—when, in brief, we lift our souls to the noblest ideal that they can grasp, we shall leave behind us these bad dreams, and realise, as we cannot now, the SPIRIT AND THE TRUTH OF SPIRITUALISM.

SPIRITUALISM
IN SOME OF
ITS RELIGIOUS ASPECTS.

"The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil."—St. John vii. 20.

"Have any of the Pharisees or the Rulers believed on him?"—St. John vii. 48.

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"—St. John i. 46.

"We have all heard the witty saying that scientific truths have three stages to pass through. First, the truths are denied; next, they are declared to be contrary to religion; and lastly, it is said that no one ever denied them."—*The Times*, leading article, September 23, 1874.

"No talents and acquirements can serve in this crisis without an absolute renunciation of claptrap. Those who cannot attain to this have no part in the future which is before us; real insight and real progress are impossible for them. Jesus would have said of them—*They cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Contemporary Review*, October, 1874.

"They do us an ill turn, and we owe them no thanks for it, who compel us to keep going back to examine the old grounds, and declaring their want of solidity. What we need is to have done with all this negative, unfruitful business, and to get to religion again—to the use of the Bible upon new grounds which shall be secure. The old grounds *cannot* be used safely any more, and if one opens one's eyes one must see it. Those who inveigh against us could see it, if they chose, as plainly as we do; and they ought to open their eyes and see it, but they will not. And they want us to go on trusting foolishly to the old grounds as they do, until all tumbles in and there is a great ruin and confusion."—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Contemporary Review*, October, 1874.

I.

OLD JUDAISM AND THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

SPIRITUALISM has had many opponents. Science has looked down on it with a cold sneer; Philosophy has tabooed it; Fashion has given it the cold shoulder: though now, with proverbial fickleness, she is coquetting with the subject that she once looked askance at; and Theology has roundly asserted that it is the work of the great Father of Lies, diabolic in its origin and devilish in its outcome. Perhaps this last objection is the most dangerous of all. Superstition dies hard, more especially when the "craft is in danger." From time immemorial the devil has been the convenient scape-goat on which every inconvenient truth may be fastened. It was so in the last great epoch, as in every one that preceded it. In all ages when God has been revealing to man higher views of Himself, man has shrunk back, and, unable to discern them, has affirmed them to be of the devil. When Jesus Christ was engaged with His mission on earth, the Jews said of Him—"He hath a devil, and is mad"; or, if that precise mode of objection failed, they recurred at once to another—"Have any of the Pharisees or Rulers believed on Him?" Just so, now-a-days, men say of the new truth—It is of the devil; or, failing that, they cry with the writer in the first number of the *New Quarterly*—"Let a few of the great names in science be ranged on the side of Spiritualism: let some of our men of science who are philosophers as well as savants say they believe in it, and it will be time for reasoning men to bestir themselves." Pharisees and Rulers again, only in another guise.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

At the time when Jesus Christ was born into this world there was much in the state of society, especially of the religious world, which bears a very close resemblance to the days in which we live. Men had outgrown the old faith. A large portion of the thinking world had lapsed into infidelity. The Sadducees believed in nothing, neither angel nor spirit, nor even in a future state. Others had lapsed into mere formalism—they were the Ritualists of the period—neglecting “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth,” they would recognise nothing outside of the strict limits of the Church—*i.e.*, of their own opinions. They deemed that they possessed the key of knowledge, and they persecuted any one who refused to enter by their door, doubtless quite as honestly as devout men were burned and martyred in the bloody reign of Mary, or as the Pharisees of the *Record* and the *Rock* would now persecute, if they could, all who venture to disagree with them.

The Word of God had become of none effect through the overlaying of man’s tradition. Mighty pains the Scribes took to elaborate mere textual criticism. Laborious effort elaborated gloss after gloss, until the simplicity of the Divine message was obscured by the fogs of human ignorance, even as now the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ is lost in the mists of modern Christianity. If any one would see how far human ignorance can disguise Divine truth, let him select some single point of Christ’s teaching, and read the commentaries upon it by divines of various Churches. The Fathers of the Early Church, the Mediæval Roman writers, the commentators of the Eastern Church, the Anglican, German, and modern orthodox theologians, to say nothing of writers external to the Catholic Church—all these and thousands of others have piled up each his own little mound of criticism, until the bewildered reader feels that the germ of truth has

long since been lost, buried deep beneath the divergent opinions with which it has been overlaid. And still the dreary work goes on. Volume after volume issues from the press, each rendering confusion worse confounded. Revision committees laboriously plod over mere textual criticism, spending years of valuable time in preparing emendations which will add one more shock to unreasoning faith, and fabricating one more bolt to be launched by the hand of orthodoxy against its own stronghold. The parallel is complete.

We shall see it if we recur to the days of Christ. How did God deal with the state of the world which we have described as a condition of dissatisfaction with the past, and of expectation in the future?

The means taken to enlighten the dense ignorance and prejudice of the Jewish Church was perhaps the most unlikely that could have been devised for the purpose. If we look at the state of the Jewish world at the time of the coming of John the Baptist, remembering to view it from an orthodox Jewish standpoint, we shall see points of similarity to what is now occurring in our own midst, which are well worthy of serious attention. The comparison between the Jewish world as it would appear to an orthodox Pharisee, and the Christian world as it now seems to an orthodox Churchman, may be drawn somewhat as follows.

As the Jew looked round upon the state of his religious world in the days immediately preceding the birth of Christ, his reflections would carry him back over the religious history of his people.

Four thousand years of this world's history had rolled away since, in the far-distant past, the promise had first been given of someone who should regenerate humanity. Nations had arisen and sunk again into obscurity, and still it was unaccomplished—"A light shining in a dark place." Two thousand years had passed over the chosen Israel since the day when God had first said of their Father Abraham—

“In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”; and still the Day Star to which that promise pointed had not arisen upon the favoured nation. And now, after centuries of intercourse with the elect Church and people, by angelic visitants, by miracles of mercy and judgment, by a continuous stream of prophetic promise and vision, God had at length, as it seemed, sealed up the fount of prophetic light by that prediction which closes the canon of the Old Testament, that Elijah the prophet should re-appear before the advent of the Redeemer. Still for five hundred years or nearly, after that closing prophecy, no voice but the voice of uninspired man was heard throughout the once divinely instructed Judah. It was a season of peculiar spiritual desolation. God seemed to have withdrawn Himself from His Church—“Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.” Few eyes among them were lifted up to watch for the twilight dawn of day. Few were looking for the consolation of Israel, or if they did, it was not for a heavenly and spiritual, but for a carnal and earthly saviour, for the monarch who should come in all the pomp and pageantry of earthly sovereignty to reward his true followers with the coveted treasures of earth.

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It was indeed a season of especial darkness. The glimmerings of day, however, were at hand, and the first Divine utterance that broke the prophetic stillness so long undisturbed was the voice of the Angel of the Lord sent to a priest in the Jewish Temple to forewarn him of the birth of the Forerunner of Messiah. It is curious, moreover, to observe that the thread of prophecy which Malachi had relinquished was taken up unbroken. The first prophetic utterance of the New Testament is a continuation of the last prediction of the Old. The continuity is unbroken. John the Baptist, first Prophet of the Gospel, is a living fulfilment of the final prediction of Malachi, last Prophet of the Jewish law.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HIS MESSAGE.

It was in answer to this prediction that suddenly there appeared in the wilderness of Judæa a strange man of unusual aspect and bearing; a solitary man, one severed from the common tastes of his species; a melancholy man, who loved the desolate places and the waste; whose clothing was but a tattered skin of some solitary wild beast of the wilderness; whose food was but the locusts and honey which the solitude supplied; whose resting-place was the bare rock, and the desert his home. This was John the Baptist, the Forerunner. He stood there in savage isolation, apart from the world to which he came to testify; but he had a "Voice" which soon surrounded him, even in the waste wilderness, with listeners. He had the voice of truth, of terror, of warning, which testified of forgotten promises, of faded hopes, of a degenerate Church and a ruined world, of wondrous things in the past, of glorious things in the future, of the fan which was to winnow the world, of the fire which was to purify the Church, of the near at hand kingdom. It was a Voice that reached the cities of the land, and soon peopled that solitary plain with their multitudinous inhabitants. "There went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan." The learned Scribe, the proud Priest, the ministering Levite, the Roman soldier, the despised Publican, and the self-complacent Pharisee—all came flocking to hear the fervent eloquence of the desert preacher, and to cry, "Who art thou?" and, "What must we do?"

What was his voice to them? Was it some courtly strain of flattery that poured the gentle unction of peace into their souls; or a strain of misty æstheticism that dealt with the feelings rather than with the life; or the enunciation of oft-told platitudes which might tickle their ears; or a rigid ceremonialism which rested on the dogma, "Do this and live,

do it not and die"; or a stern insisting upon the intellectual acceptance of a prescribed creed, "Purchase salvation by belief and live, or, believe not, and have eternal death"—was this the message of the first Forerunner? Assuredly not: it was none of these. It was the most awful, the most uncompromising, the most stern and almost savage denunciation of class sins. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," rung in the ears of the self-righteous Pharisee fresh from his ritual observance and his neglect of judgment, mercy, and truth. "O generation of vipers, bring forth fruits meet for repentance." "God will of these stones raise up children to Abraham before you." "There stands one among you whom ye know not." His day is near, His kingdom is at hand. It will be a day of purging, of threshing, of winnowing, and sifting—a day which you must face.

We may almost seem to see that strange and solitary man, as he stood upon the brow of some precipitous rock in the wilderness of Judæa, with the fords of Jordan at his feet, testifying to the gracious dealings of Jehovah with His people, when He divided the waters that the ransomed might pass over; before his gaze the dark expanse of that sea of death which covers the cities of destruction—Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim. We may picture him as he stands there, stern, dark, severe, wild in outward mien, his unpolled hair streaming over his massive shoulders, his strong gaunt limbs almost unclad, a hairy man girt with a leathern girdle about his loins, hardened by long lonely fastings, a terrible summoner to repentance, terrible even to the faithful, and with barely a word of absolution for the sinner. We may almost catch the deep and solemn tones of those deeply solemn words—"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." And as we gaze we recognise in this Forerunner, the man who was to come in the spirit and power of Elias, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the

disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." What manner of messenger was this to the Pharisees and Sadducees of Israel? Surely a most unlikely one: one as little likely to command acceptance as any we can fancy; and yet how like to that other messenger whom God had previously sent to convince His people of their sins. Elijah seems indeed to have reappeared according to the word of Malachi. Our minds go back to the days of Ahab and Jezebel, and the points of similarity come strikingly before us. Like the Baptist, Elijah came as a witness against his nation's sins. Like him, he was a Reformer—a testifier that God was giving His people a new revelation of Himself. As an epoch closed upon the chosen race, the constant cry of both was—"Repent, and change your deeds." "If the Lord be God, then follow Him; if Baal, then follow Him." Like John, Elijah too was a melancholy man, ever mourning over his people's sins, wild in his garb, solitary in his habits, dwelling in caves of the rock, his home among the wild beasts and the ravens by the side of the brook Cherith. In his end alone he differed from the Forerunner. Miraculously translated, as the Jew believed, it was fancied that he should return in glory to inaugurate Messiah's reign. The blue heavens, it was thought, would be cloven, the mighty voice of the rushing whirlwind would again be heard, and the chariot and horses of fire would descend, bearing the prophet from heaven to the city of the Great King. The blazing chariot would go up to the Holy Mount with a mighty noise and the sound of the trump, while kneeling thousands would cry as of old—"My Father, my Father! The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" And then, they fancied, Messiah would come in all the visible splendour of regal state, King not only of the heavenly Jerusalem, but, what they valued very much more, King of the earthly Jerusalem too. Their troubles would be at an end, the Roman oppression would cease, and the favoured

people would once more be the chosen of God, chiefest of the chief ones of the earth. Such was the dream. The fulfilment was the cry of this solitary man in the wilderness, the most unlikely of all Messengers of the new Revelation.

THE BIRTH AND MISSION OF THE CHRIST. .

And when the Messiah was born, the same unlikely condition was perpetuated. Let us turn and view the birth of Christ from the orthodox Christian standpoint. Let us dwell a moment on that astounding mystery, the cardinal dogma of orthodox Churches, the union of God with man in the person of Jesus Christ. Majesty and meanness seem everywhere combined in the history of the Son of God. In the eternal counsels of the All-wise it is decreed—so we are taught—that the Son of God should be born into this world to save it from the doom of sin. The King of heaven is to descend to earth and to become a Son of Man. Who then shall be his mother? On whom among the great ones of the earth shall this chiefest honour be conferred? On none: but upon a lowly virgin espoused to a carpenter unknown and unhonoured among the world's nobility. In what city and in which of the royal palaces shall His infant form be cradled? In none: but in the corner of an empty manger of a wayside inn the Lord of Life was born. The angel hosts of heaven receive the Divine commands to herald this mighty miracle—God manifest in the flesh. To whom, then, among the kings of the earth are they commissioned to bear their message? To none: but to simple shepherds as they watch their flocks beneath the midnight sky, following their simple avocations. Kings of the East and wise men, led by the Star of Bethlehem, came to worship and offer costly oblations to the new born King, but they made their offering in a stable. So it was throughout all His life: majesty and meanness are throughout combined. As for instance when His word of power spoke peace to the

diseased soul and devils trembled at His voice ; as when a word from Him healed the sick, and disease fled vanquished from His presence ; or, still more marvellously, when His utterance of miraculous power unbound the spell of death, and recalled the mouldering body from the grasp of dissolution ; or as, when on the mount of transfiguration, He stood before His three disciples in the unveiled glory of one who communed with those who had long since left the sphere of earth, and a Voice from the open heaven bore witness to the well-loved Son ; or as, when insulted, mocked, reviled, and crucified, He wrung from the Centurion the confession—“ Verily, this was the Son of God.” It was true of Him as it had been true of all who bore God’s message to the world—He was a most unlikely messenger, and sprung from a most unlikely source. The people said of Him—“ He hath a devil, and is mad,” and the Pharisees sneered at Him as a Pretender, the Sadducees would have none of Him, but “*the common people* HEARD HIM GLADLY.” The parallel is sufficiently plain ; and they who regard what we have written as a fair expression of what they hold to be truth, are not those who can fairly dismiss the messengers of the New Faith with the sneer that their story is absurd, and themselves unlikely messengers.

II.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

THE Church and the world in the present day are but little different from the Church and the world in the days of Christ. The Church which arrogates to itself the title of Catholic has been occupied of late with attaching to a fallible man one of the inalienable prerogatives of Almighty God. In the Church of England, among the different sections into which it has been severed, the High Church—the Pharisees of the period—are occupied with the minutiae of ritual, well-nigh to the exclusion of real vital religion. The Low Church is occupied in teaching terrible dogmas, which found no place in Christ's Gospel, and in consigning to irremediable hell all who refuse or are unable to accept them. The most active religious life is found outside of the National Church, and in quarters most widely removed from acceptance of its tenets. And even amongst these, what a divergence must be sadly noted from the "simplicity that is in Christ." The Christ-idea, the great spiritual truth that He proclaimed, is dragging out a lingering life, choked by the weeds of sacerdotalism and human theology.

Were it possible for a man who was unacquainted with the popular religion of the period to enter some of the Churches which best represent any popular phase of opinion, he would be most struck with the absence of the Christ-like spirit, and with the prevalence of those precise characteristics which distinguished the Pharisees and Rulers of the days of Christ.

We refrain from criticising the popular beliefs. The task would be endless and profitless. Nor is it necessary. They are mutually destructive, and the numberless incoherent fragments into which Christian Churches are split, have little in common but the name of Him whose teaching and practice they so little represent. Dogmatic theology has no charms for us. We deal rather with facts than with theories. And the special fact that concerns us now is, that as was the teaching of John the Baptist to the orthodox Jew, so is the teaching of Spiritualism to the orthodox Christian.

It is not strange that, in the face of this divergence, religion has lost its hold upon the masses. A careful study of the signs of the times, as far as they effect the thinking portion of the community, will show the infinitesimal degree to which—in any orthodox Christian sense—religion leavens representative thought. Such works as “*Ecce Homo*,” “*Literature and Dogma*,” “*Supernatural Religion*,” and “*The Creed of Christendom*,” must arrest the attention of any one who studies this side of the question. “*Popular Christianity*,” says Mr. Matthew Arnold, “at present is so wide of the truth, is such a disfigurement of the truth, that it fairly deserves, if it presumes to charge others with Atheism, to have that charge retorted upon itself. And future religions will perhaps not scruple to condemn it almost as mercilessly as Polycarp condemned the religion of heathen antiquity. For us, the God of popular religion is a legend, a fairy tale; learned theology has simply taken this fairy tale and dressed it metaphysically.” And again, “Some, we know, have made their God in the image of the inferior animals. We have had the god Apis, and the God Anubis; but these are extravagances. In general, as God is said to have made man in His own image, the image of God, man has returned the compliment, and outwardly or inwardly has made God in the image of man.” Turning from this view to that which is best exemplified by the “very learned and exact book which has lately

appeared, having for its title, *Supernatural Religion*," the case is not improved. The writer, with vast store of erudition and merciless use of logic, demolishes the popular view of the Bible. He "leaves the reader when he closes the book with the feeling that the Bible stands before him like a fair tree all stripped, torn, and defaced, not at all like a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." The popular conception of miracles, and the sacred record with regard to them, are simply shattered. A careful and exact estimate of the work in question appears in the *Fortnightly Review* of October, 1874, from the pen of the editor; and these remarks are worthy of careful note, though too long for quotation.

OBJECTIONS THEN AND NOW.

If we have made clear the points which we have wished to present, it will be seen that the very objections which the Scribes and Pharisees of the nineteenth century bring against the present enlargement of our views of Revelation are precisely those which their Jewish prototypes brought against that Revelation of Christ which our accusers have agreed to accept as final. For them God has closed the book of Revelation, and has ceased to speak. So thought the Jew when the echoes of Malachi's prophetic voice had died away. Yet John the Baptist heralded the Christ, even as now messengers are heralding the dawn of a richer and truer faith. The Jew sneered at the source of the new teaching—"Can any good come out of Nazareth!"—the modern orthodox Christian does the same. The Old Jew, even when partly Christianised, could not shake off his worldly notions of respectability and ambition. The modern Christian views with horror anything that comes from without the Church, and vainly looks for some unknown time when his Risen Redeemer shall return, and the millennial reign shall begin, and he shall have his share of glory.

And if his positions are impugned, he is ready with the parrot cry that greeted Christ—"This blasphemer says." Or if he be pushed still further, he will put argument aside, and answer all objections by a text—a text wrested from its context—a text from some work written in ages past for other men in other states of being—a text from a book the original of which he probably cannot even read, and of the authenticity and application of which he has not the faintest notion. Surely, if there be a Deceiver of man, he could not have devised a more complete plan for paralysing the intellect and deluding the soul, than this fallacy which is so rife amongst us!

It is impossible, indeed, to deal with objections so long as they take the shadowy form of isolated quotations from the Bible. To deal with the matter on its merits, it would be necessary to investigate the questions of inspiration, revelation, miracles, the authenticity of the passages quoted, and the correctness of their translation. What is meant by Inspiration? Is it verbal or not? Is all the Bible inspired, and the English translation too—for that alone is known to ninety-nine out of every hundred who attack us? If that be pretended, we have no more to say to persons so foolish. If not, we are prepared to define the limits of Inspiration, and the value to be attached to particular passages as of binding force on us.

Is it pretended that Revelation ceased with the Book of the Apocalypse? or that within the covers of our Bible we have the only and the complete revealing of God? or that such Revelation is one for all time and for all mankind? or that in all its several parts it is of binding force on us and on all men? If this be pretended, we have no more to say to persons of such heroic faith. If not, we are prepared to estimate the value of the old revelations in their succession, and to collate and compare the views of the Supreme there enunciated with others which have been revealed in other

ages and to other peoples, as well as with those which are being now revealed amongst ourselves.

Is it pretended that the Age of Miracles is past? that it ceased with the Apostles of Christ? that the miracles of the Bible are literally true, and all others false? If that be pretended, we are prepared to retire from the field of controversy in dismay. We do not fight with ignorant fanaticism. If not, we would point out that Jesus Christ especially promised an increased power to His followers; and that, therefore, miracles (so called) may be expected to continue instead of ceasing. And this expectation we would show to have been abundantly realised amongst His true followers, in all ages subsequent to His, even to the present moment.

Is it pretended that we, living in the nineteenth century, are bound by the enactments of the Levitical Law as regards dealing with Spirits? If so, we are prepared to enforce on our accusers the whole of its provisions. We decline to allow them to pick out what suits their purpose, and to reject the rest. The whole or none, if our opponents please; and by the time they have accepted and obeyed the whole law, they will not be in a position to find much more fault with us.

It would manifestly require a volume to treat even superficially of all these points. They are not within the scope of the present essay. We can but say—and we shall be careful to say nothing which is not capable of direct proof—that we do *not* believe that God once spoke and has for ever since been dumb. We do *not* believe that He inspired the Jewish and Christian Bibles both in the original and the translations, and that we have there an infallible record of the Divine Word. We do *not* believe that any text can settle any moot point. We do *not* believe in the authenticity and applicability of much that passes for inspired truth. But we *do* believe that in the Bible we possess a strange and tangled, but most deeply valuable record of the dealings of God with divers men in divers ages. We read and learn of Him with pleasure and

profit, but we do not take (for instance) the sanitary legislation of Moses as our one guide and law. We *do* believe in a present God operating in our midst now as of old : the same God, using similar means for a similar end. We *do* believe emphatically in the teaching of Jesus Christ, and we reverence Him and His work in a far higher and more rational way than do those who attribute to Him words and claims which were never His, and who distort and twist His teaching into something which He never meant.

III.

SOME FREQUENTLY RECURRING OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

I. THE BIBLE MIRACLES AND THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM.

THE age of miracles is said to be passed: and although certain phenomena described as miracles are recorded in the Bible, they are alleged to be utterly *unlike, both in kind and degree, anything that has occurred since*. Is it so? In the 16th chapter of Genesis it is stated that an angel appeared to Hagar, Sarah's maid, in the wilderness, and comforted her.

In the 18th chapter it is stated that three angels in the forms of men appeared to Abraham upon the plains of Mamre, that Abraham entertained them with material food, and conversed with them at the door of his tent for some considerable time.

In the 19th chapter of Genesis it is stated that two angels in the forms of men appeared to Lot at the gate of Sodom, and rescued him and his family from impending danger.

In the 21st chapter it is said that an angel appeared again to Hagar, and comforted her about her boy Ishmael.

In the 22nd chapter it is said that an angel intervened to save the life of Isaac, who was about to be sacrificed by his father.

In the 28th chapter it is said that Jacob had a dream, that in the course of that dream he saw a ladder extending from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

Thus, within twelve chapters we have records of phenomena which prove, if they are accepted as real, the intercourse of spirits, frequently in a material form, with earth. The age of miracles has ceased! We recommend anyone who is inclined to affirm that, to read the records of spiritual phenomena during the past year. He will there find that the intervention of spirits with earth—ay, in a material form—so far from having ceased, is more pronounced than ever. And if he will give himself the trouble to place side by side the evidence for their appearance now, and their appearance then, he may decide for himself which body of evidence he would best like to place before a jury. For the former we have the sworn testimony of hundreds of credible persons now living amongst us—men whose words are unimpeachable—whose evidence would be sufficient to hang a man, and who have submitted the phenomena to rigid scientific investigation, the accuracy of which leaves nothing to be desired. For the former we have—our orthodox friends may say what; but assuredly something which is not the result of scientific investigation.

Again, in the 6th chapter of Judges, we have the case of Gideon, who, when summoned to his mission to relieve Israel from the oppression of Midian, requested a sign to confirm his doubting mind. There is a fanaticism of incredulity as well as of credulity, and Gideon appears to belong to those who were in the condition of fanatical incredulity. Accordingly, he requested a sign, and it was given. A fleece of wool placed upon the ground was drenched with dew to such an extent that a bowl was filled from the wringing of the fleece while the ground around was dry. Still Gideon was not satisfied, and he requested that the process might be reversed. "Will my Lord allow me to place the fleece again, and let the wool remain dry, and the ground become wet?" It was done; and time after time have we seen manifestations in no degree dissimilar given for the confirming of weak faith, and reversed or altered, according to dictation, to satisfy the weak

brother. Gideon was not the only man who has wanted a test of his own devising.

Not to multiply instances, the book of Ezekiel, in its first three chapters, records the various manifestations that occurred to the prophet—his dreams and visions and spiritual intercourse. Often in the course of the record Ezekiel says that a spirit entered into him and enabled him to hear a voice from the sky telling him what he was to speak. It is only those who are acquainted with the phenomena of trance-speaking who can enter into the exact parallel between the experiences of Ezekiel and those which are current amongst ourselves. The New Testament is full of similar occurrences. It is one vast record from Matthew to Revelation of manifestations similar in kind to those so familiar to Spiritualists, and scarce one of them but can be paralleled in thousands of cases which occur at the present day. It would be tedious to produce evidence on such a plain matter of fact. Those who doubt it may be recommended to investigate for themselves.

II. SPIRITUALISM IS NECROMANCY, AND THEREFORE FORBIDDEN.

Shifting the ground from that of the final cessation of divine agency among men, our opponents have another objection at hand: "It is wrong for us to deal with spirits. No doubt spirits did appear as is alleged of old, but at any rate it cannot be denied that God forbade the Jews from dealing with them, and even prohibited them from going near any dealers with familiar spirits." In fact, Spiritualism, they say, is necromancy, and necromancy is forbidden in the Bible. "In the latter days"—that is, *now*, according to the assumption of these interpreters—false Christs, false prophets, signs, wonders, doctrines of devils, and all the rest of it are prophesied, "in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." From all this they argue that the

condemned necromancy have come under the auspices of the devil to usher in the advent of Christ (strange conjunction !), and that this is one of the signs of the times.

This jumble contains fallacy upon fallacy. It is not worth while to go into the question at length, simply because many who seriously advance the argument are fanatics, whom no reasoning would reach. It is, however, so frequently put forward by pious and well-meaning persons, that it may be worth while to say that Spiritualism is not necromancy, but that it is, in its complete sense, the intervention of the spiritual with the material world, of which intervention the Bible is one long record. To call it by a nick-name which is only applicable—if at all—to a small portion of its sphere of action, is disingenuous. It is no new thing, and was known as well to the prophets and seers of Israel as to us. It has been and is a recognised instrument of divine intervention with mundane affairs. Necromancy was forbidden *to the Jews*, simply as a vast number of other things were forbidden to them. And why? The reason is stated over and over again. They were to be a peculiar people, separate and distinct from all the nations round them. Everything that these nations did, the Jews were not to do—and all these peoples were acquainted with and practised communion with spirits. So, lest the Jews should frequent the heathen mysteries and heed the heathen messages, they were cut off from the opportunity once and for all. The command was to them and not to us, and people have as much right to ask us not to eat pork, to keep the Jewish Sabbath, or to fall upon the first Japanese we see in the street and slay him with the edge of the sword, as they have to quote Mosaic laws about necromancy and apply them to us as our rule of life and conduct. Some people seem to think that everything is settled by a text. It is no use to argue with such. They may be left to their texts, and then they will pick out only those that suit them. Injunctions about “trying the spirits,” “seeking earnestly spiritual gifts,”

and the texts which describe angelic and spiritual visitants are all ignored or explained away with a lack of sense and reason which would be pitiful were it not mischievous. The latter days alluded to were the days of the destruction of Jerusalem, and there can be no doubt that the disciples imagined the end of the world was to be then : Christ was to come when the Roman foe was crushed, and the Millennium was to begin. There is no shred of reason for transferring the predictions about that epoch to this. The disciples were plainly mistaken in their ideas.

Spiritualism gives a new colour to religion, and the modern dealings with the spirits throw the best light upon their intercourse with men in ages past. If persons will be content to take a rational view of inspiration, and of the records of that marvellous story which is so new and yet so old—the Bible—they will see that spirits, in some form or other, have been the vehicles of God's communications to man since time first began. And they may gather from that the hope that they will continue to be so till time shall be no more.

III. SPIRITS ARE TRICKSY OR EVIL.

Again, it is alleged that the spirits who communicate are demons—at best, personating spirits, or Pucks.

This objection is one that has its rise in the difficulty which most people find in fitting in the new knowledge of the future state with the old idea of it, which has been erroneously evolved from a too literal acceptance of the oriental imagery of scripture. Most of us have our theories of the future drawn from orthodox sources, and they very much colour our expectations. We cannot imagine our friends returning for the purpose of giving a mere passing greeting, and then leaving us unsolaced. The instincts of humanity are against the notion. "I am sure," says the sorrowing widow, whose agonised mind is not in the best frame for accurate judgment

and who just now thinks that Spiritualism means the return of the departed, especially of *her* departed, "I am sure, if my dear husband were permitted to return to me, he would never leave me with the shred of a sentence such as this. He would have said so and so, and so and so. . . ." This is pure human instinct, exaggerated and intensified by sorrow. For instance, did any wife, bred up in the strictest sect of our religion, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Puritan of the Puritans, ever seriously picture—let us be pardoned for putting the question plainly—*ever seriously picture her husband in the material hell of fire and brimstone in which she professes to believe?* Did the most red-hot Calvinist ever really picture his son there? Assuredly not. He will narrow down the elect to a handful out of the myriad myriads of humanity; but he will take care to put himself and his friends among the chosen few. If driven into a corner, he will take refuge in platitudes about the mercy of God, though he is careful enough in shutting the rest of the world out from a share in it. This, I say, is pure human nature—selfish at root—and shifty from being driven to unworthy straits by unworthy conceptions of God.

Personating spirits must be either—1st, Those who, as a hoax, or from malicious motives, or from a love of posturing under great names, "fool us to the top of our bent."

No doubt there are such spirits, and the curious investigator who seeks to pry into all mystery, and asks the profoundest questions of any chance spirit that he comes across, will not be long in making their acquaintance. Some of them would seem to be on a lower plane than our own; others are apparently destitute of moral consciousness, and play tricks that soon tell their own tale—the tricks of a Puck, rather than the delusive attempts to deceive and ensnare, which are suggestive of an evil origin; others, again, are vain creatures, strutting in borrowed plumes—Shakespeares who cannot spell, Bacons who cannot convey consecutive ideas; others are really actors of excellence, who play their part for

a time with skill. But all, of whatever degree, soon show their real character to a patient and reasonable man, who is not in himself the reflex of the spirits he has attracted to him. All of us are liable to the temporary vexation of having to deal with such spirits; but it is our own fault, or that of our guardians, if we do not dismiss them, the better for a brief intercourse, and turn to something more worth attention. It is the folly on this side that generates, or at least attracts and encourages, a deal of the folly on the other.

If not such as these, then—2nd, Personating spirits are demons: devils, in short, emissaries of Satan.

Here we come again across the result of orthodox theological training. Theology framed for itself long ago a devil which has been a convenient lay figure ever since. I do not see why such a devil as Calvinists, Puritans, and the narrow school of Evangelicals believe in should not account, on the most comprehensive principles, for the whole mystery of evil. He is practically an Omnipotent God of Evil, powerful for evil as the Supreme for good, restrained by no laws, trammelled by no compunctions from within—a merciless, sleepless, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of Evil. No power can exclude him from man's most secret life, for he is Lord of all man's passions. No power can fetter him until a mysterious far-off-day, when he is at last to be disposed of for ever. What wonder that that day seems shadowy, the while the devil is at large on the earth! Prayer, indeed, may drive him off for a while, but only for a while, and even prayer must seem a broken reed to lean on in the face of such a foe. While he is rampant, even heaven itself can know no security.

THE ORTHODOX DEVIL.

Is this so? Whence came the idea? We have spent some laborious hours in collating from the different books of the

Bible the various senses in which the word is used, and in tracing the growth of this Omnipotent Fiend of Orthodox Theology. The results, not a little curious, are too long to find a place here; but it is not too much to say that the term is applied generically to everything which the writer wishes to brand with his disapproval. And as regards the actual Personal Devil, the epithets applied to him, and the work which he apparently performs, are most remarkable. He is the Accuser of his brethren (Rev. xii. 10), the Angel of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. ix. 11), The Adversary (1 Peter v. 8), The Dragon (John xxvii. 1; Rev. xx. 2), The Enemy (Matt. xiii. 39), The Evil Spirit (1 Sam. xvi. 14), The Lying Spirit (1 Kings xxii. 22), The Old Serpent (Rev. xii. 9), The Father of Lies (John viii. 44), The Crooked Serpent (Isa. xxvii. 1), The Unclean Spirit (Matt. xii. 43), The Great Red Dragon (Rev. xii. 3), The Power of Darkness (Col. i. 13), The Prince of the World (John xiv. 30), The Prince of Devils (Matt. xii. 24), Prince of the Power of the Air (Ephes. ii. 2), Ruler of the Darkness of this World (Ephes. vi. 12). This is a fair list of *aliases*, and it is by no means complete. He is also Apollyon (Rev. ix. 11), Beelzebub (Matt. xii. 24), Belial (2 Cor. vi. 15), Leviathan (Isa. xxvii. 1), Murderer (John viii. 44), Tempter (Matt. iv. 3), Liar (John viii. 44), and Satan (Job i. 6).

And yet the ghastly catalogue is not half written. The term *Devil* in Scripture is so variously applied, indeed, that one finds it hard to know what is really meant. For instance, a comparison of 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 with 1 Chronicles xxi. 1 shows that the same act is attributed to God and to Satan. How is this? In Luke xiii. 16 the term *Devil* is applied to a disease; in John vi. 70, to a traitor; in Zech. iii. 1, to an adversary; and in Mark viii. 33, to a worldly man. Are all these devils, or the work of the devil, or what are we to understand?

THE GROWTH OF THE IDEA.

The growth and development of the idea is of this sort. Satan does not appear in the Old Testament except in the later books—Job, Zechariah, and 1st Chronicles. His functions originally appertained to Jehovah, the Jewish God. He it was who hardened, provoked, destroyed. And it was only when the spiritual sensitiveness of the Jews rejected this idea as applicable to their God that the functions of Accuser, Adversary, Satan, were handed over to “a Son of God,” a chief persecutor, as in Job i. 6. Bit by bit the functions of this Adversary develop. His familiarity with evil apparently makes him suspicious, and he becomes not only an Accuser, but a Slanderer, and as such is rebuked when offering (Zech. iii. 2) to become a slanderer of Joshua, the high priest. He next becomes a *diabolus*, an aider and abettor of crime, and he tempts to its commission for the pleasure of seeing the criminals punished.

This was the state of Jewish belief about 588 B.C., when they became closely associated with Persia, and borrowed the Ahriman, or Evil Spirit, and erected him into a sort of Infernal God.

In the New Testament the development increases; and our translators have materially aided it by the laxity with which they have rendered the words, Satan, Diabolus, Adversary, Slanderer, etc.—*e.g.* St. Paul (1 Tim. iii. 11) warns the wives of the deacons not to be “devils”; wishing to be polite, the translators rendered the word “slanderers.” Again (Titus ii. 3), St. Paul warns the old women not to be devils, but the word is rendered “accusers.” So that our difficulties are increased by this lax use of terms.

It is correct to say that the term “devil” is one of very wide application, and of easily discerned development. We have seen some of the persons and things to which the term is applied. Our heart sickens at the notion that this personage,

with all his Protean aliases, is loose in the world, malignantly trying to delude confiding folks. If this be so, then we are indeed accursed. But we take heart of grace, and boldly strip the mask from this gruesome Fiend. He has been, as we have pointed out, a steady growth. Oriental love of imagery and personification first crystallised him into shape. He was furbished up, dressed, and rendered hideous by the morbid fancies of mediæval monks, whose minds, from a long unnatural course of fasting and maceration and loneliness, had become warped, distorted, and diseased. The creation was then taken in hand by such poets as Dante and Milton, further embellished and adorned by poetic fancy, until he has come forth the convenient fetish of popular theology, such as we hear of now in the full-flavoured fire-and-brimstone theology of the Calvinist, or see him in the hideously grotesque delineation of Doré.

When the theory is taken in pieces and examined, it simply evaporates, and the Devil merges into one of the undeveloped spirits who abound both in and out of the flesh. And this is probably the truth. In the world to come, as in this, the evil and good are mingled; and change of condition works no magic change of nature. "He that is holy is holy still; and he that is filthy is filthy still." Evil men become in their time evil spirits, and act accordingly. One of the most vicious consequences of the popular theory of the effects of a death-bed repentance is to lead to the half-belief that everybody goes into the next world more or less saintly, whatever his life may have been. The idea is monstrous, dishonouring to God, and demoralising to man. The evil man does not change his evil nature by dying; the result of his evil deeds clings to him, and he cannot, as it were, transmit them to a hell where the Devil may have them as a deposit for his use in laying pitfalls for the human race.

Far be it from us to deny that undeveloped spirits may and do cause vast mischief both in the flesh and out of it. We

would rather insist on the fearful harm that may be done by them, the lusts they may foster, the crimes they may incite, the angry passions they may stir. If the information we have received on the subject be at all true, this is a subject of most vital import, and the action of the Adversaries is most real and deadly. But we are now fighting against the notion of an Arch Fiend of Evil, such as Mediævalism has pictured, and Modern Christianity has adopted. It may roundly be asserted of him, that while there are devils many in the sense of undeveloped spirits in the body and out of it, there is no such Arch Devil as theology has evolved for itself.

IV.

ON SPIRIT COMMUNION.

AGAIN we say that evil is not extinguished by bodily death. And we would solemnly warn all who deal with this matter that they beware of the means they use, and of the temper in which they approach it. Indubitably it is dangerous to a certain extent, and to certain natures. Dangerous to the evil, who will attract evil by the law of affinity, to the foolish gaper who will get pretty much what he is fit for; but not dangerous to the sincere and pure, who pry not from idle curiosity nor force themselves unbidden into communion, who are free from the curses that bring malign influences round men—Vanity, Pride, Selfishness, and the like. Not dangerous to these, round whom the guardians watch, and fence them from attack. But the Vain Coxcomb, the Selfish Egotist, the Wise in his own Conceit, has so little to gain from the spirits who will throng around him, that, in words of solemn and sacred import, “it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea,” than that he should meddle in the matter at all.

It would be no deplorable result, if men should get a more fixed idea of the harm that *may* be done by indiscriminate, foolish, ill-regulated attempts to gratify vain curiosity or selfish feelings by communion with the spirit-world. We, at any rate, heartily wish such a notion God-speed. For we are assured that not even the orthodox Devil is such a foe to us as many men carry within their own breasts.

ON THE BIBLICAL WARRANT FOR SPIRIT COMMUNION.

But while this is an undoubtedly necessary warning, it is a monstrous thing that students of the Bible should deem it wrong to "try the spirits" whom God permits, or, if they please, who come without permission, to commune with men. The mere list of those who are recorded to have seen and conversed with spirits would be a long one; and though we have no hope that preconceived opinion will be shaken by any facts, or that texts which we may quote will affect our opponents more than their texts affect us, we will even put down a list of *some* of the persons who so dealt with spirits. It contains names that all will reverence:—

Adam - - - (Gen. iii. 9.)	Solomon - - (1 Kings iii. 5.)
Eve - - - (Gen. iii. 13.)	Elijah - - (1 Kings xviii. 1.)
Cain - - - (Gen. iv. 9.)	Elisha - - (2 Kings ii. 12.)
Noah - - - (Gen. vi. 13.)	His Servants - (2 Kings vi. 17.)
Abraham - - (Gen. xvii. 1.)	Daniel - - (Daniel x. 5.)
Lot - - - (Gen. xix. 1.)	Eliphaz - - (Job iv. 15.)
Isaac - - - (Gen. xxvi. 24.)	Ezekiel - - (Ezek. iii. 2.)
Laban - - - (Gen. xxxi. 24.)	Nebuchadnezzar - (Daniel iii. 25.)
Jacob - - - (Gen. xxxii. 30.)	Belshazzar - - (Daniel v. 5.)
Moses - - - (Ex. xxxiii. 11.)	Amos - - - (Amos ix. 1.)
Balaam - - - (Num. xxii. 31.)	Zechariah - - (Zech. iii. 1.)
Joshua - - - (Josh. i. 1.)	Jesus - - - (Mark ix. 4.)
The Jews - - (Judges ii. 4.)	Peter - - - (Matt. xvii. 13 Acts. x. 13.)
Manoah - - - (Judges xiii. 11, 18.)	James - - - (Matt. xvii. 3.)
Manoah's Wife - (Judg. xiii. 3, 9.)	John - - - (Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9.)
Samuel - - - (Sam. iii. 11.)	Saul - - - (Acts ix. 4.)
Saul - - - (Sam. xxviii.)	
David - - - (2 Sam. v. 19.)	

Now, an apology is due for referring to such a mass of texts, which, probably, none of our readers will take the trouble to verify. But, while admitting the tediousness, we must maintain the necessity. Were all these deluded of the

Devil? It will be maintained by none. Were they, then, sinning in so dealing with spirits? Our opponents cannot allege this, seeing that the most patent case of communing with the dead occurs in the case of no less a personage than Jesus Christ himself. Was the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration real or not? If real, then we have the highest and holiest sanction for communing with the dead. If not, then what is real?—what of the record are we to believe? Our opponents, if they commit themselves to that theory, have inserted a wedge which will cleave asunder the whole volume of Inspiration, and leave it a shattered, worthless mass of fragments. If they wish to demolish the Bible, they are taking the readiest means to that end. And if such things did actually occur—nay, have occurred habitually, why not now as then? The habit of quoting texts is contagious, and it occurs to us that the wise man said: “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, . . . that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been”; and “the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be.” We can find throughout the Bible no indication of the close of this avowed communion. Jesus practised it, and His apostles too; and the Apocalypse, which closes the canon of the New Testament, is one prolonged record of communion with disembodied spirits, and of clairvoyant vision of things which were to come.

The argument is as strong as can be conceived, and it lies with overwhelming force on those who accept a few words of the Bible as conclusive settlement of a difficulty, even more than on those who are accustomed to use their own reason in everything, and who decline to meet on that common platform where Papist and Puritan alike stand, the surrender of judgment either to an Infallible Bible, or to an Infallible Pope. For ourselves, we do not require to have it proven to us that “all things are lawful,” even though “all things be not expedient.” Of the expediency we will judge for ourselves.

Our opponents, having appealed to the Bible, may be left to draw what comfort they can from its decision. To quote the eloquent words of Mr. S. C. Hall, F.S.A., in a pamphlet on "The Use of Spiritualism":—

"They refuse to believe that Mr. Home and others have been raised, without hands or any visible power, and floated about a room; but they say they believe that Philip was 'taken up,' and conveyed from Gaza to Azotus; and that they credit Daniel when he says, 'He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by the back of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between the heaven and the earth.' They will not believe that a simple, uneducated peasant girl has written Greek sentences, and a man from the plough delivered a Latin oration; but they say they believe that, on the day of Pentecost, apostles and disciples 'spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.' They will not credit the healing powers of the Zouave Jacob, Dr. Newton, and others; but they say they believe that at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, a man was made to walk who was impotent from his mother's womb. They will not believe that a heavy table has been raised from floor to ceiling without touch of human hand; but they say they believe that the stone was rolled back from the door of the sepulchre. They will not believe that voice-music has been heard continuously when no 'living lips' were moved; but they say they believe that shepherds heard voices praising God in the Highest. They will not believe in modern trance-mediumship; but they say they believe Ezekiel when he wrote, 'And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me on my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.' They will not believe in the cold breeze, and violent shakings of rooms that usually precede communications when Spiritualists are 'with one accord in one place'; but they say they believe in 'the rushing mighty wind' that shook the house in which the apostles were assembled. They will not believe in the voices heard by Spiritualists; though they say they believe in the voice heard by Paul on the way to Damascus, which some of the attendants 'heard not,' and in the voice that hailed our Lord, heard by some, though others 'said it thundered.' They will not believe in 'direct spirit writing'; although they say they believe that Jehoram received a written communication from Elijah four

years after he had been taken from earth. They will not believe that writings and drawings are now produced without draught, design, or will; but they say they believe that David thus received instructions how to build the Temple. They will not believe that, in our day, seen or unseen hands have been known to write what was afterwards read; but they say they believe in the handwriting on the wall at the feast of King Belshazzar. They will not believe that a coal of fire has been placed on the head of a white-haired man without singeing a hair; but they say they believe that three men were thrown into a fiery furnace from which they issued unscathed. In short, that angels and spirits do now communicate with men and women, earth-living, they will not believe; although they say they believe that angels announced to the shepherds good tidings of great joy—that a multitude of the heavenly host heralded them to the manger at Bethlehem—that Moses and Elias talked with our Lord on the Mount—that it was an angel who reproved John when seeking to worship him, saying: ‘See that thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets.’ ”

APPEAL TO INTELLIGENT STUDENTS OF THE BIBLE.

It would be an endless and fruitless task to attempt to bring home to many minds the arguments which they are not fitted to entertain. To many the Bible contains the ultimate revelation of their God. They are not even able to understand its progressive development. A text from Genesis, from Isaiah, or from St. Paul, is to them equally conclusive. They are not even able to say of the utterances which they so glibly quote whether they are authentic, whether they are properly translated, whether the circumstances under which they were uttered are applicable in any degree to our own state and time—whether, in short, what they produce as a clenching argument is of any force whatever. They suffer from Bibliomania in an aggravated form, and can only be treated as other monomaniacs. A somewhat extended experience of such persons has convinced us that it is impossible to deal with them until their mania shall have been successfully

treated. We presume, from past experience, that there are fanatics who will continue to believe that the Pope is the root of all evil, and, in similar fashion, many able and pious fanatics will consider to the end of the chapter, that they have settled everything by the quotation of some curious text. Such are beyond the reach of argument, and may well be left alone. They have neither the knowledge, nor the experience, nor the mental capacity which qualify them to form a judgment.

But, putting these persons aside, we venture to appeal to the sane and thinking portion of mankind to throw aside all pre-conceived notions, and allow their minds to dwell candidly on the parallel between the age of Jesus Christ and that in which we live. If we have delineated that parallel at all successfully, it must surely strike an unprejudiced mind that the source from which the Revelation of Jesus Christ came was as unlikely to an orthodox Jew as is the source from which the modern Revelation springs to the orthodox Christian. The very same arguments which assail the spiritual development of to-day might have come—*mutatis mutandis*—from the mouth of Caiaphas in reference to Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the stock argument against all that is new, that it is devilish in its origin and outcome, is nothing fresh. An orthodox Pharisee and a scoffing Sadducee might have used it just as consistently as they who attributed Galileo's telescope and its revealings to the Devil, or as they who now dispose of what they do not like by the same cheap expedient. Human nature must change very considerably before that easy means of shunting disagreeable truths is abandoned.

But outside of these persons who are so unable to see and discern the signs of the times, for whom the Volume of Inspiration is closed, and in whose opinion God has abdicated His functions as Ruler of the Universe, there are vast numbers with whom it is far more important to deal. They have thought for themselves. Reason has not been paralysed by Faith; and they have dared to believe that God has given

them an intellect for some nobler purpose than that they should crush it out in obedience to some priestly dogmas which will not stand the test of Reason. They decline to believe that the God of the Past has vanished from the world, and that the old order has given place to the dreary *régime* which these apostles of the past rejoice in. To them it seems far otherwise. The Book to which their orthodox opponents refer them is so far from being a dead letter, recording only shadowy visions of the past, that it is a living record of progressive development, the counterpart of which they see actually being evolved in their very midst. They smile at the idea of a frequently badly-translated text being applied as an argument; but they are ready to point out, in a way to which their opponents can make no pretensions, the gradual evolution of the idea of God, and the progressive revelation of the duty and destiny of man. They have studied—some of them at least—the sacred records of other lands, and can point out how Indian Vedas and Persian Zendavesta throw light on early Bible story. They can show how the experiences of Confucius and the Buddha, the early Egyptian and later Mohammedan seers and prophets, confirm and elucidate much that is obscure in our own records. And they can point out how not a few of the earlier myths of Jewish story find their source and spring in Indian sacred lore many ages previous to their appearance in the form in which we know them. They put aside the theory of Verbal Inspiration as a clumsy and stupid blunder, and can point out how God reveals Himself even now as He revealed Himself to holy men in all ages of the world's history. They are not scrupulously careful to split hairs over mere textual criticism, though they regard each page of the sacred record with feelings of rational and intelligent affection, to which those who never really understand it can make no claim.

It is to such as these that we speak. Many, we know, will view with mistrust and suspicion any attempt to bring home

to thinking minds a new view of God and the hereafter. Across the stagnant pond of their intelligence [no ripple of doubt has ever passed. No bracing breeze has ever stirred its changeless surface. No angel has ever descended to trouble those waters over which hangs the impenetrable mist of Ignorance. They are content to believe what they dare not or cannot think out for themselves. For them life is so far from being real and earnest—an intelligent factor in their future state—that they can dismiss it with an easy conscience, if only they can persuade themselves that its long tale of sin has been settled for them by the Atonement of the Son of God. They will die with hope, for in a moment they will be with their Maker, joining their (must we not say discordant?) notes to the anthem of the angels. Such are beyond reach ; and it is hard to say so without a feeling of overpowering regret at man's perversity. Let them rest, since they will. They do but sleep that sleep of death of which mountain travellers tell ; when the unfortunate sinks into a dreamy repose, from which he will not wake on this side of the great change. They are practically dead to the voice of reason. We could not reach them even if we would ; and we turn to those whose eyes are fixed on the dawning of the day, who would know how the ever-present God is acting now, and of what sort is that Revelation which He is giving.

V.

SPIRIT-TEACHING.

THIS then, as we have learned it, is Spirit-teaching, imperfectly sketched, but in the main trustworthily.

THE GOD-IDEA.

God is spoken of as the Supreme, All-wise Ruler of the Universe, the Object of the ceaseless adoration of all created sentient beings. No spirit who communicates with earth, however long his spirit-life may have been, pretends to have seen Him, or to have penetrated to His presence. They know more of the operations of His laws: they are more deeply penetrated with a sense of His perfection, His wisdom, and His love: they have cast aside much of the anthropomorphism which clings round our ideas of Him: they are content to adore His perfection, and to speculate little about His nature. They insist invariably on worship of the Supreme, adoration, praise, meditation, and prayer. They tell of constant adoration and praise on their part. They inculcate on us the same, and are specially strong in insisting on the blessing of meditation and the privilege of prayer. They view the latter not as the sort of charm that it is to many men, but rather as the link that joins man to the ministering angels, who are the intermediary agencies between him and his God. Man, they say, is surrounded by "ministering spirits," of whose services he may avail himself if he will, or whom he may drive from him by neglect of

prayer, by engrossing care for the bodily and the earthly, by ignoring the higher spiritual part of his nature. Constant progressive cultivation of higher sentiments in work for God, for his fellow, and for himself: a living of the Christ-like life of adoration and prayer, and self-denying work, together with that spiritual rest which springs from meditation and conscious aspiration to a high and elevated standard: this is their ideal.

MAN—HIS DUTIES TO HIMSELF, TO HIS RACE, AND TO HIS
GOD.

Of man they speak as a being, a spirit, temporarily enshrined in a body of flesh. The spirit-body, the real man, is perpetuated beyond the grave when the shifting atoms with which it has been clothed are dead and done with. They reject as a baseless figment the story of a fall from a state of primeval innocence and perfection to a state of degradation in the persons of Adam and Eve. They treat man as a being evolved from a lower state of existence and destined for a life which is eternal, so far as all experience and analogy point: as placed on earth for the purpose of gaining experience in a training school. His spirit-body, on the death of the natural body—a death permanent and complete—passes, so they say, into the state for which it has fitted itself by its life on earth. Its business here has been to assimilate its experiences of earth, to prepare itself, by the development of its powers and the zealous discharge of its duty, for future progress. The duty which is incumbent upon it here is to develop its higher, and to repress its less noble faculties, and to discharge all its righteous obligations (in obedience to conscience, the inward monitor) to God, to its fellow-man, and to itself. We are told that the Moral Code, which has been given from time to time in generations past, and which the quickened moral sense in mankind sanctions, defines, and amplifies, roughly suffices,

though some of its details may require restating and altering so as to apply to the new requirements of a changeful age. Its underlying principles are true for all time. There are, however, points of development which man's quickened sense of higher verities qualifies him to note. The hard and fast rules of obligation couched in the emphatic language of command—"Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not"—need to be spiritualised and widened in conformity with the dictates of a quickened spiritual sense, and in accord with the attempt that the children of the New Dispensation of Spirit are making to lead a higher spiritual life. As the coming of the Christ shed truer spiritual light on the dead ritual of the Jewish Church, so it is said that a popularised and deformed Christianity needs the baptism of the Spirit, that its dry bones may be quickened, and it may become once again instinct with life.

Viewing man in his Personal state as a tripartite being composed of a spiritual, an intellectual, and a bodily nature, they say that, as respects the former side of his nature—the SPIRITUAL—his duty may be summed up as GROWTH in knowledge of Self, of his duty to Self and the great Brotherhood of which he is a unit, and of his own future destiny as an accountable being.

As respects his INTELLECTUAL nature, his duty may be roughly summed up in the one word CULTURE.

As regards his BODILY nature, PURITY in thought and act, Temperance, *Health-seeking* in its fullest and noblest sense, specifies *his duty to his physical body*, on the condition of which his spiritual state so largely depends.

Having respect to man as a Citizen, owing a duty to the community of which he is a member, they sum up his complex duties in the words CHARITY, PROGRESS, ORDER, TRUTH.

Here it is that the fruits of man's own inner development make themselves manifest. As an individual, he will reap in the life hereafter the fruits of his spiritual culture here.

But as a Citizen, those fruits are to be shown in a love of PROGRESS in all lawful ways ; in a ceaseless attempt to bring home to the community the beauties of true and orderly growth in virtue, peace, and knowledge. He is to labour to make other men partakers of his own knowledge. He is to be animated by a love of LAWFUL ORDER, by a strict obedience to constituted authority in due subordination to the sanctions of the highest Judge, and by a zeal for the defence of those ordinances and enactments which have been formed by sages in times past, and which are, until amended by a richer and riper experience, the expression to him of the collective wisdom of his fellows.

In all his dealings he is to be animated by a pure love of TRUTH—the highest ideal that his spiritual development can grasp. He is to order himself in his dealings with mankind in conformity with those enduring and eternal principles of rectitude which are summed up in that word, and the application of which, to the several cases which must arise at every turn in life, is to be governed by CHARITY, or Active Love. Truth reigning supreme, its action is to be tempered by Charity, as human Justice is by Equity.

Fallible in himself, he is to be tolerant of divergent opinion, charitable in construction of doubtful acts, while stern in denunciation of hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud. He is to be courteous in intercourse, ready to bear his share of the common burden, and to assist any who need his help ; zealous in good deeds, and ready to impart, to all who seek, a share of the knowledge that he has gained.

PROGRESS, TRUTH, CHARITY are the great watchwords of the life of the Spiritual Man in his relation with his fellows.

Viewing man as a creature with duties to his Creator, the attitude prescribed is one of REVERENCE and ADORATION, as of a being in one of the lowest stages of creation who approaches the Supreme. Reverence, not slavish fear—the feeling of the son, rather than of the slave. The ministering

angels and spirits are regarded as the means of approach between man and God, the links in the chain that binds earth to heaven. The future will develop knowledge, and throw light on much that now is dark. Meantime so much light is given as to illumine the page of Bible story with a much-needed light.

It is further pointed out that, in discharging his duty to himself and to the race, man is doing a most important part of his duty to God. Self-culture, Progress in Wisdom and Truth, and the loving dissemination of knowledge by which mankind is raised in the scale of culture, this is the active side of the Godlike life, of which the passive side is Adoration, Praise, and Prayer.

MAN'S FUTURE DESTINY.

Such, in broad outline, minor points and some more interior considerations being designedly omitted, is man's duty to God, to his fellow, and to his own self. In proportion as he discharges it, he rises in the scale: he "works out his own salvation," and is blessed. In proportion as he neglects it, he becomes degraded, in obedience to irreversible laws. Influences of good are repelled: evil gathers round him, and he becomes worse and worse. For, it is insisted on over and over again, man is the arbiter of his own destinies. It rests with him whether, in the honest and conscientious discharge of the duties and obligations laid upon him, he will fit himself for future progress, or whether he will neglect his spiritual development and live a corporeal existence, which shall starve his higher nature and chain his spirit down by centring his affections exclusively on earth and earthly things. Helps man has if he will avail himself of them; but not a store of merit laid up for him on which he may draw at will, and by virtue of which he may reverse on his death-bed a character which has been the imperceptible growth of a lifetime, the laborious aggregation of myriads of daily acts.

For these acts man's absolute accountability is emphatically maintained. The future life, differing from the present one only in degree, and, in the states immediately succeeding this, only in a very slight degree, is a life of continued progress, in which the sin-stained spirit will be compelled to remedy in sorrow and shame the acts of conscious transgression done in the body.

PUNISHMENT.

Punishment is not the vindictive act of an angry God, but the inevitable consequence of the conscious transgression of known laws. Sin must be *conscious* transgression, or it is not *sin* at all, but *error*. Error involves loss, but not punishment. The retribution laid upon the transgressor consists in his being made to see the result of his sins, and to remedy it in all its infinitely-ramifying consequences, so far as that is possible. The Spirit—the same individual consciousness as was the man on earth—may find progress in a state other than this: or may return to the scene of his former life, gather up the broken and tangled threads of his old sins, and so work out his own salvation. For instance, if he has neglected one side of his spiritual nature—the affectional, the moral, or the religious—his business is to remedy that defect, to cultivate the neglected talent, and so to seek for progress. Perhaps he has been earthy, base, sensual in the body, and in giving unbridled rein to passion has wrought misery and wrong to himself and to his fellows. His own misery he must bear till it is alleviated in remedying the effects of the misery of which he has been the author. This is punishment, the inevitable fruit of conscious sin. The penalty must be paid somewhere and sometime, and by personal effort, either such as indicated in the hypothetical case quoted above—though not by Re-incarnation as popularly understood—or by some more purely spiritual method of illumination and instruction.

REWARD.

Similarly, reward does not consist in instant admission to a heaven where life is one long vista of dreamy inactivity. The heaven of the spirit is a heaven of ceaseless progress through the ages, higher and yet higher, reaching onward and upward to perfection. "Nearer, my God, to Thee" is the motto which is inscribed upon it. Just as the evil deeds done in the body have their issue in the life disembodied, so with ✓ deeds of good. "Their works do follow them," or rather they have preceded the new birth of the spirit, and have prepared for it a home and a congenial society. The consciousness of duty done, of progress made, and of capacity for progress developed, of spiritual graces nurtured, of truer insight gained, and wider fields of knowledge opened out—this is the spirit's reward in the past, its earnest of further progress in the future. It must be gained before it can be enjoyed. It comes as the rest that succeeds toil, which only the toil-worn can enjoy.

The Religion taught by the spirits is emphatically one of common life—of the body as well as of the soul—and in this it bears a marked resemblance to that of the Master—Christ. They take little count of the theological differences which so perplex us. Man's views of God, they say, are all more or less erroneous, and the theology for which man has striven to his last breath with acrimonious zeal is surrendered without a struggle when the spirit has soared above the earth, and looks down with purged eye on the points it once thought so all-important. They care far more for what a man has *done* than for what he has *believed*, inasmuch as habits, tempers, characters are so formed, and the immediate condition of the spirit is settled. The Religion taught by the spirits is, we make bold to say, one which is eminently calculated to make a man a better citizen and a better man, in all his domestic, social, and civil relations, and to fit him, indefinitely more than any with which we are acquainted, for future progress and happiness.

VI.

THE OLD CREED AND THE NEW.

IT will be seen from this short and imperfect sketch that spirit-teachings contravene much that Christians have agreed to hold *de fide*. Whether they are so divergent from the teachings of Jesus Christ is not so certain. For Him and for His work they profess the highest reverence. They declare their mission to be but the complement of His; and where they seem to contravene or to traverse some part of Christian faith, they say that it is man's addition, and not God's revelation, or the real teaching of the Christ, that they contradict.

They claim for themselves nothing short of a Divine mission. The signs and wonders of which men make so much they regard as only the necessary witnesses of the inner underlying truth which they proclaim. God, they say, has always so revealed Himself. The agencies at work in previous revelations, of which there have been many, are identical, they say, with those now being used to spread a higher and truer knowledge of God among men. Inspiration they declare to be the same in all ages. God, by His ministering spirits, spoke to man in old time as He speaks now. The human instrument has always been more or less fallible, and revelation has been adapted to the special needs of those to whom it was given. The agencies at work were identical, whether the medium of revelation was Moses or Ezekiel, Isaiah or Paul, and the message given through their instrumentality was one adapted to the wants of those to whom they ministered. Consequently no texts taken from a book intended

for the Jews two thousand years ago can be held to be a binding argument on those who are situated in other conditions. No text of whatever nature wrested from its context can be adduced as an argument; no utterance in times past is to be assumed to be literally correct, or legally binding for all time. The knowledge of God has been progressive, and we now know better than (say) Job did about God, His nature, attributes, and works. Men would not assert such a miracle as the stopping of the sun and moon to be literally true; nay, they have even outgrown the conception of God which permeates the Athanasian creed. They are getting to have a higher ideal of God, and so the time has come when truer and nobler notions of God can be revealed. Man has become dissatisfied with the old conceptions; in fact he has outgrown them. He looks around him for something better, and in answer to his cry comes the voice of God, who has waited to reveal further ideas of Himself. It was so, we have seen, in the days which preceded the coming of the Christ. When John the Baptist uplifted his voice in the wilderness of Judæa—not, let it be reiterated, a very likely place in which to proclaim a new Gospel—it was after long ages of darkness and desolation. The old faith had waned, the whole world was looking out for something—it knew not what—just as men are now wondering whether there is anything left in which they can believe, and are sighing out helplessly, “If God does not speak, then indeed religion will be dead.” When Jesus Christ at length came forth from His seclusion and spoke to men, it was but for three short years, and all He had to say was the veriest heresy to the orthodox Scribe and Pharisee. He gathered His associates from the rank of life in which He Himself had been nurtured. He was far more a Social Reformer, as men would then view Him, than anything else. He denounced bitterly what we should call the educated upper classes, not because of their position and education, but because, in spite of them, they were so heart-

less and so little useful in their day and generation. He dealt emphatically with daily life ; and the Gospel which He preached must have seemed to an educated Pharisee as strange as the Gospel we have now sketched would seem to an orthodox churchman of the present day. " Have any of the Pharisees and Rulers believed on Him ? " Yet He did not desire to destroy the old religion—the law and the prophets—but only to lead man on to higher and purer truths. Much rubbish that man had gathered over God's truth must be swept away—the petty ritual observances must go, and the shadow be replaced by the substance. The time had come for the revelation of new truth, and though man should crucify its Prophet, future generations would recognise the truth and beauty of His teaching.

The parallel, on the hypothesis of the spirits, is complete. Now, as then, man is looking for more light, and is receiving it. Round the light is mist and fog. It will disperse, and man in coming days will recognise the source from which the light shines. It has always been so. Generations must pass while the light is making its way. Much that man has chosen to place upon God's truth must be removed, but in the end, to a materialistic age which cries for proof of future life, that proof will be given in the only possible way which can satisfy and convince—namely, by positive scientific demonstration. And so, in strict accordance with all this, much is made of Reason and less of Faith. This is the age of Reason ; the sublimer age of Faith has not fully come. Man is told to weigh all by the divinely-implanted test, and to stand or fall by acceptance or rejection. Reason is the ultimate court of appeal. Trust only supervenes on rational conviction.

But all this is monstrous heresy. Well, of course, it is permissible to call it heresy, but surely it is not monstrous. Is it a bit more monstrous than Christ's teaching must have seemed to (say) Caiaphas ? Is it monstrous in its essence, in

its conception, in its logical outcome? We think not. The new must always be strange. This is scarcely more strange than Christianity in the days of its Founder must have seemed by the side of orthodox Judaism.

But it is so improbable, so unlikely. Doubtless the assertions made remain to be established by proof, and in that they differ not one whit from many other assertions which the religious world has for long agreed to stand by. We do not see the improbability. We see in the claims made the unity and continuity of God's dealings—the same God, working as of old, only we know Him better; our conception of Him is less human, more Divine. The grand question, to be solved only by patient waiting and laborious care, is not, Is it likely? but only, Is it true? The time will come when a more elaborate answer than we are now able to give will be possible. But at any rate the world sadly needs something such as that which we have sketched to answer its growing materialism. If such a religion does not satisfy it, then we have faith that we shall get a better; and it may well be that the dim outline, which alone we can see now, is blurred and faint compared with the perfect conception which hereafter shall be revealed. For ourselves, we presume to no knowledge; we do but record that which has been given to us from time to time by a faithful and elevated Intelligence, and which we have only too sadly failed in imparting in anything like the beauty and vivid force of its first unfolding. We venture upon no dogmatic opinion: but the issues at stake are so tremendous that we are impelled to register as clearly as we can the points of difference and divergence between the New Faith and the Old.

VII.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

It is impossible to deny that a creed which shall commend itself to the thinking men of the age, which shall satisfy their cravings, shall be compatible with their reason, and logically coherent and demonstrable, is very likely to obtain a hold on an age wherein a vague sense of disbelief and chafing at the bondage of Creeds and Formularies, and an impatience of the demands of Orthodoxy, are plainly visible. Moreover, if this faith, which commends itself as reasonable, is supported by evidence which science can investigate, prove, test, and authenticate, then precisely that union between Science and Religion is established, which is the great desideratum of the present day. On this point we have no hesitation in affirming distinctly our conviction that patience and perseverance in the path of investigation will lay before the scientific world proof of independent existence outside of a physical body, and strong presumptive evidence of continuous human life in a disembodied state, which will be so complete as to place the question of the indestructibility of existence among the category of scientifically established facts. And if this be as we believe, then the evidence of this New Faith will at once rest upon a scientific basis of assured truth on which no other Faith has yet been grounded.

This is of vast moment as a consideration. The miracles (so-called) that attest the truth of Bible story both in the Old and New Testaments are well nigh worthless to science. It cannot test, examine, or weigh them. It has no means of

examining the eye witnesses, nor can it trace the origin of the records from which they were described. When patient investigation has been spent on the records themselves, it is unfortunately true that results the most detrimental to orthodox belief have been obtained. In short, whether on the ground of actual lack of evidence, or on the ground of want of reliability in the record, scientific men would unanimously refuse to admit evidence so little trustworthy. (This, be it understood, is spoken *ab extra*, from an external point of view. We have now nothing to do with those who accept the whole theory of verbal inspiration.) But upon what a different ground would rest evidence which scientific men could weigh, could test, could have before them time after time, until they could deal with it as Professor Ferrier has dealt with the workings of the brain, or Crookes with the mystery of light. The difference would be absolutely incalculable, and the dream of a union between Science and Religion would be well nigh realised.

A PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Nor is this all. The argument may be carried a step further. One of the most cogent criticisms of religious teaching in the present day deals with its unpractical character. This crops out in all sorts of ways, and especially in impatience of anything that transcends reason: witness the endless discussion about prayer. Instances will occur at once in which men of the world—we use the term widely, to signify the intellects that do practically rule in the present world—put aside popular religion somewhat impatiently as good enough for their wives and children, but not practical enough for themselves. “Give us something that will stand hard daily wear and tear—not that superfine transcendentalism. It is not a working day religion, if it were even possible to assent to its truth”; and so the two sides of

criticism work together, and well nigh demolish orthodoxy. Science says—It is not true. Practical utility says—It will not work.

Now, we believe this to be an exaggerated statement, but it does contain within itself an element of truth. It is true in the main as regards modern utility, but quite untrue as regards the teachings of Jesus Christ. He was, before all, a practical teacher, and in so far as His teachings can be sifted out, every one of them forms a cardinal point in the teaching of the new faith. Purity in thought, word, and deed, as man's chiefest duty to himself; universal philanthropy and lovingkindness; self-sacrifice and self-denial; humility; sincerity; forgiveness of injuries; the worthlessness of mere external ceremony; the Fatherhood of God; and the universal brotherhood of humanity:—these were the principal points in Christ's teaching, and they have lost nothing of their lustre now, simply because they are divine verities, eternally and irreversibly true. But those doctrines which short-sighted men have piled upon their Master's teaching, doctrines contained, for the most part, precisely in those passages of the Bible which modern criticism has most successfully attacked, as, for instance, the Fourth Gospel, the latter part of the Gospel of St. Mark, and the earlier portions of St. Matthew and St. Luke—these are conspicuous by their absence. The view of God propounded in the new faith is emphatically that of Christ, not that of his Apostles. Their ideas of the future are such as the noble and simple imagery of Jesus would suggest; their reiterated advice to man to deal with himself here as a spirit embodied, to recognise the fact that the body is the avenue to the spirit, by which it comes into contact with the world, and so to tend and cultivate its perfect health, to secure the *mens sana* through the *corpus sanum*:—all this is in eminent concord with the teaching of Him who was, above all, a Social Reformer, a Pure Philanthropist, and a Practical Dweller amongst men.

The faith of which we speak is one which does, at anyrate, appeal clearly to man's reason. It is logical, coherent from its first principles down to its ultimate conclusions. Once these principles are assured, as we believe they will be, on a scientific basis, and a rational religion is before man.

But the old will all be swept away. We do not think so. Those who have gone deeply into the question of inspiration, who have tried to tabulate for themselves the relation between modern Christianity and Christ, will not be prepared to say that there is such a wide gulf between Christ's teachings and those which we have indicated.

VIII.

LOSS AND GAIN.

WHAT have we lost and what have we gained? We have lost, first of all, belief in the inspiration of the Bible as understood by the school of verbal inspirationists. We have gained a reasonable, intelligent insight into a series of records which describe the progressive revelations of God to man in different ages among different peoples. We have learned to use reason on what must always be the most vitally interesting and important book in the world to us. We have gained power to sift the true from the false, and have lost childlike confidence in what we discover by intelligent criticism to be of doubtful authenticity, or of undoubted falsity. We have still the grain, only more carefully winnowed.

We have lost that cardinal doctrine that belief is the one thing essential to salvation—a doctrine grounded upon texts found only in the most dubious parts of the Gospels; a doctrine unpractical, irrational, and, as we believe, untrue. Belief is simply the effect of a cause. It is not an act, but a condition of mind induced by evidence presented. In competent minds belief will follow as a necessary consequence upon presentation of sufficient evidence. No two minds will believe on the same grounds, and therefore the same law will not apply to all. Each must find its due ground of acceptance. This found, belief may be suppressed, but cannot in the *mind*, which God judges, be refused, though outward assent be withholden. To pretend belief is dishonest; to disbelieve in spite of adequate proof is impossible. It seems, then, that

on the principle of "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," the blessing is pronounced upon a state which is either weak or dishonest.

That vacillating condition of mind called Scepticism is a transition state, and, if it becomes permanent, is a mental disease. In a vigorous and healthy mind, when the processes of thought are complete, the conclusion is arrived at, *pro* or *con*, according to the weight of evidence. In some rare cases, the evidence is so balanced that the mind cannot incline to the one side or the other. Authority, age, probability, then have their place, and the sane mind acts on the principle *quieta non movere*. This is not Scepticism, but an exercise of the purest judgment. Scepticism, not an act but a state, a permanent condition of mind, grows by what it feeds on, enervates and depraves the power of judgment, until the victim of the disease becomes a mere puny halter between two opinions, unable to decide on any direct course of action. The result is spiritual paralysis, and grave risk of intellectual and moral depravation.

In condemnation of this vice of the age, as the spirits from their standpoint call this Scepticism, they are very strong. The parent of the Pseudo-atheism, the Nihilism, which is such a note of our generation, closely akin to Materialism, of which it is a consequence, they fight against its sway with the more sternness on account of its prevalence, and of the hold it has on the thought of the present day. They would equally, as I understand their teaching, protest against the enslaving of the intellect, the prostitution of the judgment, which would be involved in a blind credulity, an unreasoning acquiescence in dogmas which the mind took no pains to grasp in essence or in application. These are the two poles of excess and defect. In the system I am attempting to expound Faith finds its legitimate place, and my instructors are fond of insisting on the unknown potencies that are included within a fervent, active Faith. But they

insist chiefly on the use of right Reason, on the sacred duty laid on each of us to keep his light burning clear, and to preserve the power of applying, to all cases that present themselves, the discriminative faculty entrusted to us, and which we cannot employ aright unless the habit of using it is constant.

But it is when we come to deal with the central figure in the Gospel story that the divergence becomes most marked. The mysteriously incarnated God shades away into the divinest type of human nature. The Being like nothing man can reach—so infinitely high and lifted up above weak human nature—gives place to the VERY MAN, the highest realisation of man's possible; the actual living model which man may place before him for daily imitation. The God who lived amongst men gives place to the man who lived nearest God. We have lost a God-man, but we have gained a model man, all but divine. The loss is in the humanised God; the gain is in the God-like man. We will say no word of the Divinity of the Christ. The vast subject can find no place here. We confine ourselves to results, and have nothing to do with the sentimental side of the question. If it be true, it will stand; if it be false, let it perish. Few will be content to look at the question on its merits. When they can bring themselves to do so, they will find that a venerable belief may rest upon a very shadowy basis.

The idea of a good God sacrificing his sinless son as a propitiation for man is repudiated as monstrous. Equally strong is the rejection of the notion of a store of merit laid up by the death of this incarnate God on which the vilest reprobate may draw at his death, and gain access to the society of God and the perfected. In place of this it is said that man can have no saviour outside of himself; that no second person can relieve him from the consequences of the conscious transgression of known laws; that no transference of merit can wipe out in a moment a state which is the

result of a lifetime's work, nor counterbalance that which is indelible, save by slow process of obliteration, even as it was built up; that man stands alone in his responsibility for his deeds, and must work out his own salvation and atone for his own sin. At the same time, much is made of helps and aids to man's efforts in the power of prayer, in the work of ministering spirits; and sins of various kinds, which are the result of bodily organisation or of unavoidable surroundings, are leniently dealt with.

The material resurrection and the material heaven and hell go too. The resurrection of the body, long since given up by scientific men, is superseded by the resurrection of the spirit body, the real individual, from the dead matter with which it has been temporarily clothed, not in a far off future, but at the moment of dissolution. This spirit body goes to the place for which it has fitted itself. It does not remain dormant, save in exceptional cases of premature withdrawal from earth, but has absolute continuity of existence in a state very like the earth it has just quitted. Its heaven is a state of development and consciousness of duty done, knowledge gained, and progress made. Its hell is the remorse of cleared perceptions, of knowledge of opportunities wasted and graces lost, the awful, terrible state wherein the spirit is led to see itself, its foul sins, its sensual lusts and disfigurements, as the Pure and Holy see them; the lonely sense of wasted life; the sight of loved ones soaring away and leaving it alone with the depraved; the feeling that the great work has yet to be done; the burning flame which shall eat out the past, and leave a future of renewed helpful effort to be begun anew. Material fire and brimstone are gone, but does no hell remain? The harps and the thrones and the hymns are gone, but is there no heaven in the consciousness of progress, knowledge, love, in the society of those who have gemmed with their deeds the history of earth; in the sense of gradual but real perfecting which the blessed spirits feel?

THE GAIN GREAT—THE LOSS UNIMPORTANT.

It seems rather that what man could never really believe, if he ever thought about it, has yielded to that which is most in accord with his best thoughts of God and the hereafter. He need no longer perplex himself with curious questionings as to the compatibility of divine justice with eternal burnings, nor explain away man's crude notions of heaven and hell so as to make them square with his higher knowledge and truer ideal.

If he has lost throughout the Definite, it is only when the Definite blasphemously defines the Infinite. If he has lost minute material description, he has gained nobler ideals, more realisable, more true. The loss is great in some things—in that passive sense of security so dear to those who are too lazy or too fearful to think—in the simple childish notion that a feeble cry of frightened human weakness can reverse irreversible laws, and change a nature by a prayer. But the sooner such fallacies vanish, like morning mists before the sun, the better for the cause of progress and truth. The sooner men learn to think for themselves, even though their thoughts lead them to probe mysteries which orthodox creeds have dogmatically defined, the better, we say, for the cause of truth and enlightenment.

Doubtless the time has not yet come when it is proper to pronounce any dogmatic opinions. The work of destruction must necessarily precede the work of construction, and if the destructive process be long and arduous, the excuse must be found in the fact that man has disguised God's truth so deeply, and is so wedded to his inventions, that it is not easy to disabuse him. We have no taste for the discussion of points that are beset by the fiercest theological controversy. Such controversial discussions must find their place at another time than this. If we do not enter upon them now

it is not for the reason that they have not occupied our earnest attention. We have studied the arguments of all Western phases of religious thought too often not to know how much is to be said *pro* and *con* on all points. We know, too, enough of the mental attitude of scientific and thinking men to welcome any union between Science and Religion—between a rational theology and a materialistic age. As to the doubt, we do but recognise its existence. We do not create or even increase it. It is there already. And as to faith, let the honest reader contrast our faulty outline of the New faith with that which he still holds of the Old, and say candidly, Is the Old better? If he thinks so, in God's Name let him cleave to it. If he find in the New that which comes home to the inner wants of his nature, let him sift it and try it. Let him thank God and be of good courage, for assuredly no higher yearning after God ever remained unsatisfied by Him from whom it came; and no fabled Devil ever led man on to higher truth. He has no need to hamper himself with considerations such as these, or to be perplexed at heart because all cannot see alike. Many there must be—good souls who know no better—who will hug the faith of their childhood, and find it sufficient for their wants. Why should they be vexed? In the ears of others will be ringing the cry as of old—“Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” Why should they be held back? And if there be, as there always have been, halts between two opinions—timid souls who dare not, though they fain would, go on; casuists who are hampered with difficulties in reasoning; cautious souls who will make sure before they leap; why should they be hurried?

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

APPENDIX.

WRITING (January, 1877) on the alleged exposure of trickery on the part of Henry Slade, I made some remarks which it is convenient to repeat as a pendant to the preceding paper. After going through the evidence, I proceeded thus :

I have given a historical summary of the Slade case, and have said something of the tone and temper of the prosecution in the present instance. But it is to little purpose that Spiritualists view their present experience if they do not gather up the lessons that it teaches. The processes of education are very much the same, whether in the individual or the community. Man learns most from sad experience : the more sad the lesson, the more surely it is learned, and the more deeply imprinted. If the "burnt child does not dread the fire," then that child's future is easy to predict. It will turn out a foolish ne'er-do-well, always in scrapes, and unfit to shift for itself. Precisely the same rule applies to communities, and especially to such a body as this of ours. We are emphatically in need of discipline and education. We have hardly yet settled down after our rapid growth. The child born just thirty years ago has increased in stature (if not in wisdom) at a very rapid rate. It has grown so fast that its education has been a little neglected. In the expressive phraseology of its native country, it has been "dragged up" rather promiscuously : and its phenomenal growth has absorbed all other considerations. The time has now come when those who have regarded it as an ugly monster which was born by one of nature's freaks only to die an early death, begin to recognise their mistake. The ugly brat means to live : and beneath its ugliness the least sympathetic gaze detects a coherent purpose in its existence. It is the presentation of a principle inherent in man's nature, a principle which his wisdom has improved away until it is well nigh eliminated altogether, but which crops out again and again in spite of him—the principle of Spirit as opposed to Matter, of Soul acting and existing independently of the body which enshrines it. Long years of denial of aught but the properties of matter have landed the chief lights of modern science in pure Materialism. To them, therefore, this Spiritualism is a portent and a problem. It is a return to superstition : a survival of savagery : a blot on nineteenth-century intelligence. Laughed at, it laughs back : scorned, it gives back scorn for scorn. What is to be done with it? The present prosecution supplies the answer of the materialist. Every engine that can be used will be brought to bear to crush : every blot and flaw will be picked out : every slip we make will be pounced upon : every scandalous story of imposture

made the most of. We must be prepared to set our own house in order, if we would not have it very rudely done for us. That seems to be sure. We must be prepared to go in for a thorough cleaning. And, truth to tell, we want it. Though the hand that is prepared to scrub is not governed by maternal tenderness, the child is sadly in need of the discipline of soap and water. And to refuse to recognise that plain fact would augur very badly for the educational development of which I have been speaking.

Without going at length just now into the whole question at issue, it may be broadly said, without much fear of contradiction, that an observer who looks at the broad aspect of Spiritualism without any intimate knowledge of the subject, would see in it much to astonish, much to startle, much even to fill him with a certain vague alarm. To such an ignorant on-looker—and be it remembered that the outside public is and must be ignorant of the inner principles, the esoteric rationale of spiritual philosophy—the subject would present a curious picture. Let us assume that an intelligent student of man and manners in the present day desired to make himself acquainted with the working of the various factors that go to make the opinion of the age. He would have no difficulty in seeing that it is no common age, this in which we live. A diligent student of history, he would at once correlate the present epoch with those which have preceded some great revolution in the history of a people:—the same restless spirit of inquiry: the same cautious and repeated trying of old institutions and habits which are brought in their old age to show cause for their very existence: the same spirit of rampant speculation: the same eager expectation of a something “which is to come.” Everywhere and all around him he sees a process of disintegration, a destructive force that for the time obscures and paralyses constructive energy; or which, at any rate, is more conspicuous in its action and more visible in its effects. In politics the air is heavy with impending struggle: the destroying angel of war is abroad, and over us we may almost hear the rustle of his wings. In the narrower fields of religion and science the same forces are at work. The world has outgrown the religion that sufficed its fathers. The story that they accepted with unquestioning faith is now called upon to stand the ruder test of reason, and the spiritual food that fed them is found unsatisfying for the more vigorous digestion of modern criticism. Bit by bit the old power has been slipping away from churches and creeds. By slow degrees man has emancipated himself from priestly control, and he now stands and looks fearlessly into the face of that which has long been used to frighten him, and the bogie is found to have lost its power. Religion to him means something more than anything that any system however venerable, any church however infallible, any creed by whatever penalties it is sought to be enforced, can furnish him with. It means a theosophy which does not run counter to the lines of human science; which tells him of his nature and destiny, of the place whence he came, and the life to which he goes; which puts before him a God that he can worship, an ideal to which the loftiest aspirations may reach up. He seeks no anthropomorphic conception; he demands precision

only in the foundation whereon his faith may rest; content, if he can see but the tendency of life, to allow the tendencies to unfold themselves in progressive cycles of existence. First and foremost he needs to be satisfied of his spiritual existence after bodily death.

Our observer turns from this, the highest religious yearning, to the domain of science. What is the answer that comes from the realm of exact knowledge? Science knows nothing of Soul. Its scalpel cannot find it; its researches, in whatever way conducted, fail to discover it. Matter, and nothing but the properties of matter, is the result of its processes of investigation. Spirit, it says, is an invention of ignorance. Man, in his savage state of rude development, has always had a certain number of vague superstitions. One of them is that he has a soul, which will live after death. The wish is father to the thought. He would like to live, and so has framed the theory of disembodied existence; just as certain mediæval charlatans who feared death, fabricated the notion of an Elixir of Life which was to enable them to defy the last great enemy. Man has no Soul; there is no Spirit: there is no God: nothing but the reign of Inflexible Law. Man pleases himself in his infancy with these notions, and thinks to propitiate the ideal he has erected by ceremonies which he calls Religion. All in vain; the rain falls on the evil and on the good: the most abandoned reprobate, equally with the greatest saint, is crushed if he fall from a precipice, or slain by the attack of pestilence. There is one law for all; and if virtue is the best policy, it is because it is most in harmony with the laws of man's being which his own investigations have discovered, and which it required no Divine Being to reveal.

This, then, omitting all that does not show the progressive tendency of modern thought, all that survives yet among the unthinking and the easy-going, who will not be disturbed till their neighbour's house is on fire and they are half choked by the smoke, —this is the outlook that meets our observer. "Old Theology losing its power: modern Nihilism at variance with it and with all forms of religious thought. And yet in the midst of it all, the best, the truest, the noblest minds yearning for some proof of the instinct which is not all dead, that they have in them the germs of a future life that death will not be able to destroy. Have then the ancients been all wrong? Have the noblest of mankind lived for a fallacy, and died for an idea? What more melancholy, dreary thought! Is the hope of endless progress a chimera? Is modern science surely right, and must the quality of infallibility be transferred from the Vatican to Burlington House?"

In the midst of this train of thought our observer turns his attention to another phase of belief. Within the pale of orthodox theology, and even within the precincts of the Royal Society, he observes certain persons who do not entirely agree with either view yet presented to him. Some scientists not only tell him that man has a soul, but also that they have obtained scientific evidence of the fact. Some estimable and religious people assert that the friends whom death has riven from them not only live in all the plenitude of sentient existence, but that they themselves have held communion with them; and that not once but often; not "perhaps," but

"verily and in sober truth"; not seeing them "as in a glass, darkly," but openly and "face to face." Here then is the key to the mystery. If one, a hundred, a thousand of the race live again, then the law must probably be the same after all. Spirit is proven, and immortal life is something more than a speculation. No more tremendous proposition was ever put forward, and our observer will look into the evidence with attention. He finds that the believers in this creed are called Spiritualists, and in their numbers and character, in the startling strangeness of their beliefs, and in the scorn with which those tenets are received by modern Pharisee and Scribe, he recognises a resemblance to another "sect which was everywhere spoken against," now nearly 2,000 years ago, and which has survived to dominate the then fashionable belief. This does not surprise him. He is prepared to find new truth unfashionable. What does surprise him, as he becomes acquainted, in such manner as he best can, with the broad aspects of the subject, is the strange contradictions, the grotesque absurdities (as they seem to him), the trifling puerilities, the mixture of the holiest truths with the plainest fraud, that he fancies he detects all around him. Having obtained access to the only means of investigation open to him, he is at a loss to recognise in what he sees there any realisation of what he had hoped for. If he is fortunate, he will find ready evidence of the operation of a force unknown to him before, and of an intelligence very different from any that he has previously been acquainted with: but he will have some difficulty in correlating that intelligence with that of a departed human being, unless he is more than ordinarily fortunate.

Puzzled and bewildered, if not discouraged, he turns to the records printed from time to time, to the historical evidence and—unless he has the esoteric knowledge which, by the hypothesis, he cannot yet possess—he is more perplexed still. On the surface lie the most patent contradictions, what to him, in the light of his ideal, seem the most puerile follies. Shakespeare returns to demonstrate his own imbecility: Bacon, to talk bad English, and worse philosophy. Leaders of public thought in ages long past, saints and sages whose lofty philosophy and noble religious ideas are still a power among us, return to sanction the crudest speculations, or to give utterance to the most dangerous doctrines which have only to be believed and acted upon in order to revolutionise society, and turn the wheel of progress backwards. Side by side with this he finds perpetual records of alleged imposture, all too specious to his eye. The very persons with whom he comes in contact in his investigations are divergent in their opinions, and animated by motives as various. Some are merely curious, some strangely credulous, some jest, some scoff, some look for scientific proof of a pet theory, some seek to explode what seems to them an error or a fraud; few, very few, are the earnest seekers after truth, who strive with reverence and patient care to fathom the mystery that surrounds them.

All this perplexes him. Again I reiterate that he sees only what lies on the surface, he has not the inner knowledge which will enable him to brush away these perplexities, and harmonise these

seeming contradictions. He is looking at the matter from without. And I, for one, do not wonder that such an observer, with the best intentions and the most impartial mind, is bewildered and dismayed. If he has patience to pursue the investigation, he will work through all this scum and find his reward in time: but to most men this is impossible; from all it is asking too much, all the more that these surface difficulties, these absurdities and chicaneries, are no part of the subject, and should be resolutely purged away. Instead of presenting Spiritual Science in the most repulsive garb, it should be our aim to make it lovely and of good report. Instead of trivialities and absurdities, we should strive to set forth the grand truths it teaches in their most attractive aspect. Instead of permitting or tolerating what may wear even the appearance of fraud, whether the authors of that fraud be men or controlling spirits, we should set ourselves scrupulously to eliminate it by making the conditions of investigation such as to preclude its possibility. Instead of dragging spirit down to matter, we should try to raise ourselves to the plane of spirit, and to enter into relations with intelligences of moral consciousness and integrity who will teach us what we want to know. In short we must study the science of spirit, the laws of mediumship, the principles that govern intercourse between the world of spirit and the world of matter, the means by which we may avoid what we all agree, I hope, in deploring.

These are the lessons which lie on the surface, and which the present crisis should bring home to us. We are not beyond learning them if only they are pointed out; and it is only by patient investigation and discussion that we can attain to knowledge of them. I am far from thinking that I can do much to put before my readers anything that can be new. I can at best but suggest what must have occurred to many minds before, perhaps, however, it may be serviceable to state it now, and it may, at least, lead to further suggestions from others. In this spirit, with a hearty desire to avoid dogmatism, and with a single wish for truth, I venture to throw out the following suggestions:

In estimating the bearings of the subject we must have regard to our own world, to that with which we come into communion, and to the link that unites us to it. We must think, not only of ourselves as Spiritualists, but also of the outside world whom we often seek to influence, and who will meddle with us, whether we like it or not; and chiefly, we must try and understand the nature of mediumship and the conditions under which it is best exercised.

On these, the exoteric and esoteric views of Spiritualism, I propose to offer some plain reflections, tentative and imperfect, but, I hope, suggestive too. As to the necessity for facing all difficulties, there can be no doubt in any sane mind; if we do not, we shall surely suffer for it. It has been said that a divine work cannot be brought to nought by man. It may be so. I do not know; but this I do know: that man, by his folly and wickedness, may materially injure its progress, may bring it into transient contempt, and may impede when he might foster and impel its progress. God works by instruments, and though it is said again

that He sometimes chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, I have yet to learn that folly is a good preparation for any form of work. I prefer to think, as most people who are not fanatics will, that we shall be better advised in preparing ourselves by the severest exercise of our highest powers to become "fellow-workers" with the messengers of the Supreme, who are to us the ministers of His will. In this spirit let us "set our house in order," and see how we stand.

Now the questions involved range themselves naturally into those which affect Spiritualists as such, and this is the esoteric view: those which concern us in our relation to the outside world, the exoteric view: and especially those which concern the medium, the link between the two worlds. I will sketch rapidly certain considerations which occur under these several heads.

1. *Esoteric questions affecting Spiritualists only.*

There are Spiritualists and Spiritualists. We are a great body and the body has many members, which fulfil widely divergent duties, and which are related to each other only so far as they are members of the same body. There is the largest freedom of thought among us in matters non-essential. No conclave has presumed to lay down for the acceptance of the faithful a creed to be subscribed to under penalties affixed. There is, indeed, a simple yet very sublime creed which those who have come into communion with the higher spirits have received; but none has sought to force on any of his brethren any dogmatic definition of faith. On the common platform of a belief in existence perpetuated after bodily death, and of the interference of the world of spirit with the world of matter under certain conditions, those who call themselves Spiritualists are content to meet. Their private fancies are (or ought to be) thrown aside, and they are banded together in defence of spiritual existence and spiritual communion. None has any right to graft his own ideas on those stocks, or to hold as of binding force the *dicta* of spirits which, to his own mind, are commended as reasonable or fair-seeming. The platform is broad and comprehensive.

Again, none prescribes to the individual Spiritualist what part of the wide field of investigation he should devote himself to explore. To one may be commended the religious aspect of the question: to another its scientific demonstration. One may long and seek for communion with his own departed friends; another may try to search out the mysteries that beset the whole question of communion with the unseen world. One may experiment with a view to fathoming the powers of his own spirit; another to see if perchance all unembodied intelligence be indeed that of deceased humanity. There is room for all: and though he who covers the whole ground necessarily obtains a wider view than the minute investigator of a single point, still there is ample room for choice. In a science so new and yet so old, of such infinite ramifications, and of such far-reaching issues, none need fail to suit his individual fancies. The field is open to all.

Wide, then, as the field is, the comprehensive character of those who are generically called Spiritualists is not less wide. Men of many divergent casts of mind find themselves side by side: the one bond between them being a desire for truth, and a certain ability, which does not always belong to those who have not given their minds full play, to look it straight in the face and follow it when they have found it. Most of them have not found satisfaction in older forms of faith, and have come, in the course of their search after truth, to find rest within the pale of Spiritualism. Some have found in its evidences a confirmation of their belief in the "old, old story." Some see a possible union between Religion and Science. Some are simple souls who have come there to meet their friends whom they once thought dead. Some are in hot pursuit of a crotchet—unconscious cerebration, or what not. *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.* It is not necessary that they should subscribe to any declaration, or be bound by any fetters. Most of them, indeed, have emancipated themselves from rusty fetters of old and cramping creeds. The iron had eaten into their soul: and in their new-found liberty, they are little desirous to fetter themselves with fresh obligations.

Hence the organisation of Spiritualists is as elastic as may be, and in it the one desirable thing is unity of purpose with liberty of individual effort.

(1.) This, then, is one point I want to press home on Spiritualists—*Unity of action, so far as that is possible and attainable.*

Furthermore, it is a common cause of complaint among us that the communications received, so far as they are known to the outside world, are of an unsatisfactory nature. It is said that they are frequently trivial, contradictory, foolish (if not worse), and not such as to command respect from those who are little inclined to give it. I am anxious not to overstate the argument, and I must be understood as putting the allegation of an opponent. Is it so? I am disposed to think it is. In very many cases it undoubtedly is a fact that the communications made in circles where a mixed company is gathered are not of a high or consistent character. Why is this? Because, as I understand the philosophy of spirit-intercourse, we do not provide the conditions under which satisfactory communion can take place. Our public circles are frequented by people led there by the most various motives. Curiosity, a desire to expose preconceived fallacy or fraud, the wish to while away an idle hour,—such motives predominate. And this is so almost by the very nature of the case. Spiritualism attracts a good deal of public notice. Those who hear of it ask at once, "Where can I see anything of this for myself?" Entirely ignorant of the delicate conditions which beset the investigation, they are sent to the nearest public circle. The result is that any possibility of the evolution of phenomena or of the communication of information on satisfactory principles is entirely stopped. It would be impossible for me here to lay down any laws which should be observed in seeking communications from the world of spirit.

I am not venturing to do more than throw out hints. But anyone who has intelligently investigated this subject will realise the difficulty which I now point out. I shall have more to say on the question when I come to deal with the nature of mediumship: but meantime it may be said that before communion with the world of spirit can be had on satisfactory bases, *it is necessary to revise the conditions on which it is usually sought to be obtained.* The melancholy stories of imposture, too often charged on the medium when he is the unconscious instrument of spirits whom the circle has attracted, make this plain enough. It is high time that this should be seen to: and that we should learn that we have it in our power to raise ourselves, in this respect, to far higher results than any yet obtained. When we have purified our circles, when we have made it impossible for those who now gain access without question—the curious, the vicious, the scoffing, the uninformed—to get in without preparation, we shall have removed one great stumbling-block. We must diffuse knowledge of conditions, prevent the ingress of the enemy on our own side, and then we shall be in a position to commune with higher intelligences, and to preclude imposture and trick. Surely this is not impracticable. Surely it is most desirable.

(2.) This is my second point—*The purification of public circles.*

Other points suggest themselves, but I must deal only with the most salient, and that only by way of suggestion. Others may take up points which I have missed, or which do not come within my scope. I pass to the link that unites us to the world of spirit.

II. *The Medium, and the Nature of Mediumship.*

The medium is a mesmeric sensitive, and as such is amenable to every dominant influence brought to bear on him. He is the receptacle of the several positive influences of the circle. If there be present a positive mind filled with doubt, it reacts on the medium. If there be a scoffing, jeering spirit amongst those present, it cuts into him like a knife. If an over-clever person thinks he has detected or suspected fraud, that suspicion bites into the medium and “the iron enters into his soul”—precious rusty iron it is too! If vice be present, it reacts on him. If fraud suggests itself, he feels it. He is the “wash-pot” into which the collective feelings and sentiments of the circle are collected. And more than this. He is the link between them and the spirits whom their mental states attract. The communications are pretty sure to be the re-presentations of the mental state of the sitters: unless indeed a powerful controlling spirit is charged to protect and neutralise adverse influence. On the medium first of all devolves the effect of the conditions under which the sitting is held. If the minds be harmonious and the intentions pure, he is calm and passive and a fit vehicle for corresponding influences. If suspicion and evil tempers are predominant, he is influenced in corresponding ways. A mesmeric sensitive, he comes under the dominant influence, and too often re-presents the wishes and thoughts of those who surround

him : or rather, becomes the unconscious vehicle for spirits who so act.

When will investigators learn this simple truth? A medium is a mesmeric sensitive controlled by spirits unembodied. These spirits are, in the vast majority of cases, attracted by the circle; and in order to alleviate and purify our communications we must exercise supervision over those whom we admit to our circle. A medium should be dealt with in the same way as an astronomer would deal with one of his most delicate instruments. He should be isolated from the rude contact of others, seeing that he absorbs their influence, and becomes charged with their active thoughts. He should be protected from anything that can upset the delicate equilibrium which can alone make him a serviceable vehicle for communications. He should even be guarded from mixing with other people, seeing that each human being is surrounded with his own personal atmosphere, and that the medium, by virtue of his sensitiveness, readily enters into the sphere of those with whom he comes in contact. He should be isolated; kept from the possibility of being dominated by any earthly influence; trained in habits of temperance, sobriety, and chastity; placed outside of the range of vulgar temptation, and kept "unspotted from the world."

I think I hear the laugh that greets this statement. A medium is a charlatan, an impostor, who produces one's grandmother for five shillings, a noxious and "elusive wild beast," to be crushed and trampled out! Yes, I am aware of it. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* It is for this reason that our circles are crowded with phenomena at best equivocal, too often apparently or really fraudulent. It is for this reason that we have such cause to blush for the puerilities and imbecilities, the frauds and tricks that are perpetually being brought to light. The most delicate of all conditions, the most obscure of all subjects, the most fugitive of all phenomena are dealt with on principles that may do for blasting rock or clearing virgin forests, but which defeat their object when applied to cases where precise knowledge and delicate care are the first requisites. The best results will always be obtained in harmonious family circles, where jealousy, mistrust, and the grosser passions find no place. It would seem as if these spiritual plagues take form and shape in some open circles: as if the mental obliquity of some of the sitters caused equivocal phenomena. This is a wide question. Before we can hope to obtain results at all commensurate with what is possible, we must learn somewhat of the nature of mediumship and of the conditions under which it may be profitably exercised.

(3.) This, then, is my third point. *Let us study the conditions under which the best results may be obtained from mediums.*

III. It remains to consider our attitude to the outside world—the *exoteric aspect*.

Here I will be brief. I should like to have as little to do with

the outsiders as possible. I believe the energies of Spiritualists may be more profitably devoted to esoteric development than to touting for scientific recognition, or even to proselytising in any form. I do not believe that we have any legitimate *locus standi* for scientific proselytising at present. When we can get our phenomena produced under conditions which we have tabulated and laid down according to rule: when we can get them *at will*, we shall be in a very different case. Our best energies should be spent to achieve this. But seeing that outsiders *will* meddle with us, we must consider how we ought to deal with *them*.

As to the question of public circles, I have already indicated the line on which, as it seems to me, they ought to be conducted. It should be impossible for ignorant people to gain access to them and make a fiasco through their ignorance. The Lankesters should be kept out; they should be made to serve an apprenticeship before they can obtain admission.

And, in this aspect of the matter, it is well to note again what I have before said, that by no means sufficient care is given to perfecting a few experiments which can be produced at any time and place for the investigation of those who "want to see something." It can be done, and with comparative ease; and nothing would do more to place our phenomena on a scientific basis than the pains-taking attempt to perfect a few which can be produced under conditions which do not admit of doubt. I know that I shall be met with the rejoinder that Slade did that and (by the Nemesis of fate) stands now as the conspicuous example of exposure. I know, and most unjustly it is so. When knowledge has progressed even in a slight degree, the ignorance of a Lankester will be impossible. He will be educated out of himself. Only let the phenomena be produced in sufficient quantity, and under proper conditions for observation, and that cause of complaint will die of inanition. If public mediums, instead of producing a number of astounding phenomena in the dark, would devote their powers to evolving a very few simple experiments in the light, the whole aspect of the matter would be changed. I have said enough of this before. It is sufficient to add now that evidence of (1) a force not yet recognised by science, and (2) controlled by an intelligence outside of man is what we should aim at. For the rest let science come to us. We have no need to run helter-skelter to Burlington House, in order to enlighten those who do not wish to be enlightened, and who only misrepresent our endeavours. As Lord Melbourne was fond of saying, "Why can't you leave it alone?" We have enough to do without adding to our perplexities by trying to convince those who have not yet reached the plane of knowledge on which alone conviction is possible. The same energy and pains judiciously applied would enable us to command what we now ask as a favour. Let us perfect our science, and we may go down to the Royal Institution and compel attention—if that is desirable.

I have said more than enough to indicate a few of the lessons that seem to me to press on Spiritualists now. I have perhaps said too much, and what I have said may be misconstrued. I hope

not. At any rate I have said openly what is in my mind, and what I earnestly believe is of importance at the present crisis. In anything that I have said I desire to speak on my own responsibility and for myself alone. I may be mistaken in my views: but at any rate they are honestly put forward and with the sincerest motives. The questions on which I have touched are only tentatively handled. It would require a volume to deal with them as they deserve. But surely they are important: and however wrongly I may have treated them, however imperfectly I may have suggested them, they press for solution. If we do not solve them, *they will be rudely solved for us*. Nothing but good can come from our dealing with them: nothing but mischief can come from our shelving them. I hope that nothing in the mode of their presentation will prevent Spiritualists from giving them their most careful consideration.

I commenced this article by saying that we had arrived at a crisis in the history of Spiritualism. I wish to strike the same note in concluding. I emphatically believe that we have reached a crisis when we shall be compelled to set our house in order and to face much hostile criticism and even persecution. If only the crisis produces its fair result, I at any rate shall hail it with a welcome. Times of persecution cannot be pleasant times: but they should be times of profit. They should be times when lessons are gathered up, and the lines of future progress are mapped out. With the experience of past ages to guide us, it is a day too late to hope that any form of truth worth having will make its way except through persecution and trial. If it were possible for any advanced form of truth to gain acceptance quietly, I should say at once that it was not the highest form of truth which the age was able to receive. Truth is always persecuted. There are always a number of persons who have a vested interest in the old, merely because it suits them; a number who do not want to take the trouble of facing new difficulties; many who turn uneasily in their bed, and ask for a little more slumber before they get up; many whose instincts are engaged on the side of the old and the established. Every new truth has had to win its way, by most righteous discipline, through persecution and obloquy to final acceptance and belief. This grand truth of spirit communion is no exception. How should it be? Is it not the noblest, mightiest fact that man can know? And being so is it not to be expected that a materialistic age should receive it with contempt and scorn? Let it be so. Only be it ours to see that the scorn is not deserved, that we purify ourselves as those who herald a great truth should, and that we "give no occasion to the enemy of the Lord to blaspheme." If I have said anything here that can help to encourage men to hand on the torch of progressive truth, and to keep its flame pure, I shall not have spoken in vain.

THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

By 'M.A. (OXON.)'

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

IF you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct séances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestation. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held *over*, but not in contact with, it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS (*continued*).

When you think that the time has come, let someone take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this 'ask' who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer.

Lastly, try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

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